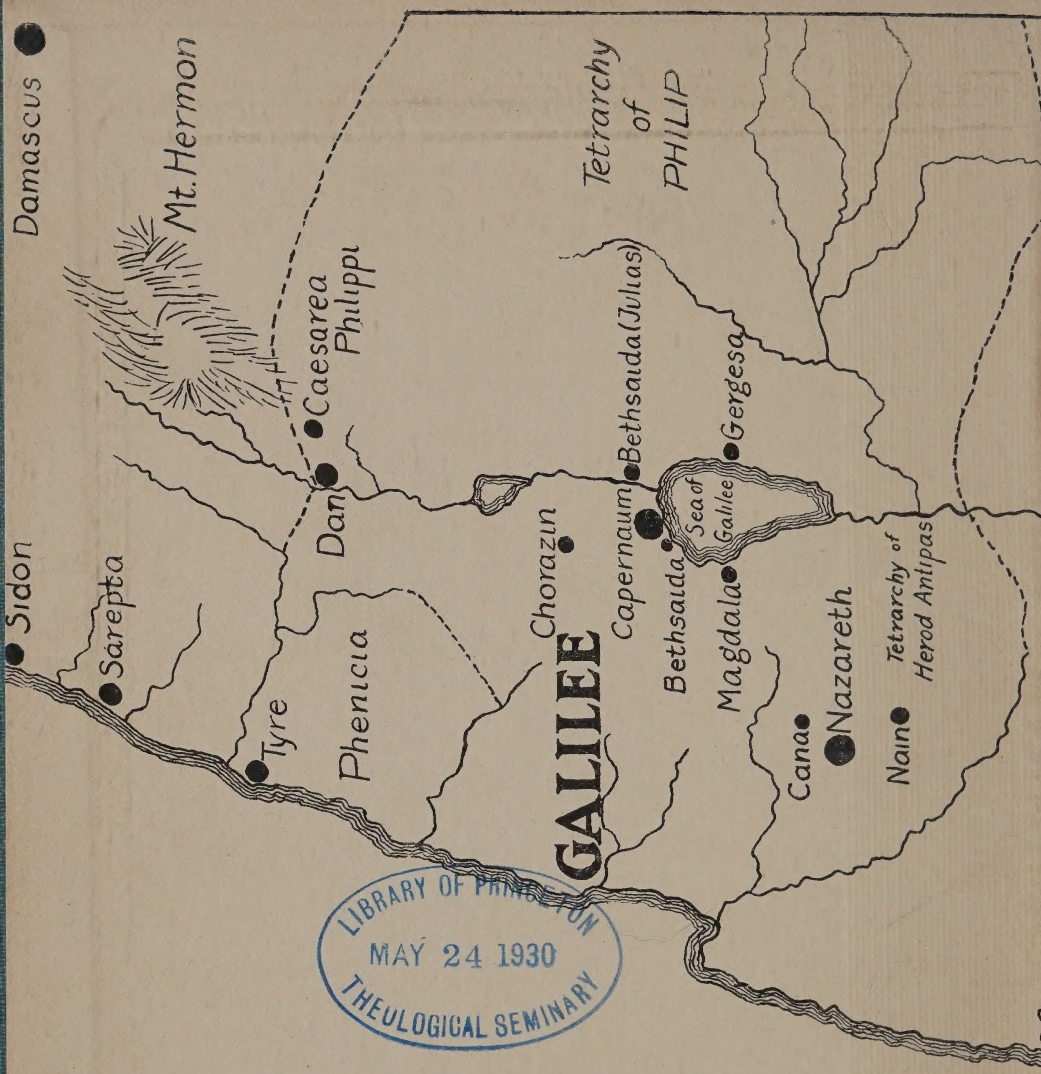
How Jesus Showed God to the People

BARTON SENSENIG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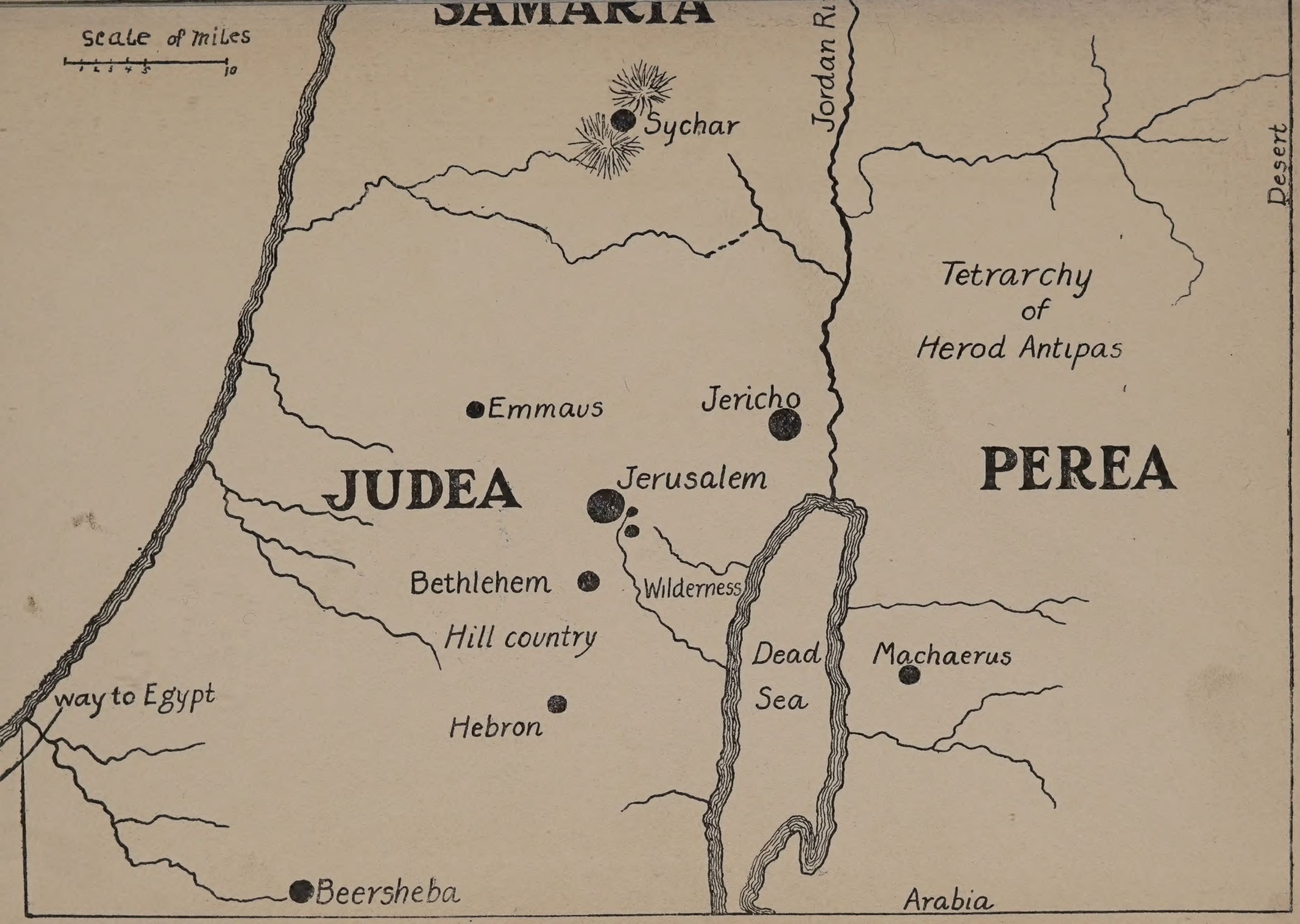
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Wilderness
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How Jesus Showed God To The People

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BY
BARTON SENSENIG

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The Gospel Complex with Short Commentaries in Simple Terms

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BY
BARTON SENSENIG

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This book is dedicated to the hundreds
of deaf boys and girls whom the
writer has taught.

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It gives me pleasure to record here my deep appreciation of the encouragement and sympathy received from friends in the preparation of this book.

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PREFACE

IT is safe to say that more information about the gospels is given today through pamphlets and books on religious themes than is acquired directly from a study of the four gospels themselves. A life of Jesus written as a simple single narrative, arranged in logical, and so far as possible in chronological order, meets more with popular approval than the four gospel accounts, neither one of which tells the whole story.

The aim of the writer is to set forth the gospel complex with short commentaries expressed in simple terms and without sectarian bias. Most commentaries are so extensive that it is impossible to cover the ground here covered in a volume of ordinary size. The writer has condensed more extensive commentaries of eminent biblical scholars into simpler ones, and these have been woven into the text. The writer's experience as a teacher of deaf children should have prepared him in part to write in plain language, and to give the subject matter a simple setting.

The teachings of Jesus are true, and are expressed in language that is simple, natural, beautiful and forceful. In quoting, we have used his words as they appear in the King James Version.

When Jesus healed people of mental and physical ailments, it is stated in the narrative that "he cast out the devil," or "he cast out the evil spirit." This simply means that He cured the person of his infirmity. When it states that Jesus was "tempted of the devil," it means that He was tempted to yield to low ideals. The language of the East is full of imagery for which we must make allowance in order to understand rightly what took place.

B. S.

INTRODUCTION

WHEN Jesus was born in Bethlehem, Rome had reached the zenith of her power; the power of the sword was supreme. The gates of the Temple of Janus were closed: there was peace in the world. Augustus, as Emperor, had given stability to government: there was great material development during his reign. He found Rome "of brick and left it of marble." With material development came moral depravity: high ideals were scoffed at: men lived in the pleasures of sense.

The Roman was taught to hope for nothing in the future, to believe nothing and to fear nothing. For the Roman there was no judgment day, no resurrection of the dead. On the tombstone was written "Eternal Sleep." With this philosophy of life, Rome became hard-hearted and immoral. Seneca wrote, "Innocency is nowhere to be found in Rome."

Herod was king of the Jews before Augustus became emperor at Rome, and died shortly after Jesus was born. He, too, was a great builder, and to win the favor of the Jews, built the magnificent temple of white marble at Jerusalem, and adorned other cities in Palestine with beautiful buildings. He was very cruel and killed many who opposed him, including all but two members of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish court of seventy-one members at Jerusalem. He is the Herod who killed the boy babies at Bethlehem, thinking to include Jesus among their number. This man was called "Herod the Great."

Most of the people of Palestine were worshippers of one God at the great temple in Jerusalem, which was the goal of all on the great feast days. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says that as many as three millions (?) of Jews from all parts of the world would gather at Jerusalem on some of the feast days, and that as many as two hundred fifty thousand lambs were sacrificed at one feast. But all this is of no avail if the love of God is not in the hearts of men. The very priests of the one God murdered the Son of God, a man who went about doing good; because they had a wrong conception of the one true God. Jesus came to show God to the people of this world.

Jehovah was the tribal God of the Israelites, and he was not supposed by the Jews to be much concerned with the welfare of other peoples. A Jewish priest of that day could hardly be convinced that God cared for Gentiles. When Paul in his defense before his countrymen stated that God told him to depart from Jerusalem to be a minister to the Gentiles, the mob would listen no further to what he had to say.

Those who were looking for the Messiah in the time of Christ, were looking for one who would break the Roman yoke, and make Jerusalem the center of world power. In other words, the Hebrew of that day thought that the kingdom of God is established in this world when a great Jewish king rules the world from Jerusalem, when the Jewish sword holds the world in subjection. Jesus was not the kind of Messiah for whom the Hebrew world was looking. His gospel of love, non-resistance and sympathy, and God the Father of all, did not fit in with their plans; and his exposure of the hypocrisy of the priests and the ruling class paved the way for his crucifixion. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is in the hearts of men. All men are called upon to repent and to bring forth the fruits of repentance. "Ye must be born again" applied to the chief priests, Scribes, Pharisees and haughty rich Sadducees, as well as to the common man.

It is easy to see why the priestly class was set against Jesus when we consider what was at stake. The living of thousands of priests centered about the temple worship. They were maintained by the tithes and offerings and the temple income. All the life of Jerusalem gathered about the temple; and when Jesus spoke words that endangered the temple influence, all Jerusalem turned against him. If the doctrine that a contrite heart was a better sacrifice than the blood of rams and bullocks once gained a hold on the minds of the people, the temple would lose its power; and the craft by which the priests had their living would be destroyed.

THE PHARISEES

There were in the neighborhood of six thousand Pharisees in Palestine in the time of Jesus. They were very strict in obeying all ceremonial laws, and held the common people to be "accursed" because they did not follow the traditions of the elders closely. Pharisees would not eat with people who were not Pharisees, and they would not eat things that had not been tithed, and they would have no dealings with foreigners. They were, in fact, a sacred caste who had little sympathy for the common herd. Though only a small part of the population, they exerted a wide influence on Jewish affairs.

They believed in the resurrection, in angels and in the Messiah that was to come. When the Messiah came, He did not belong to their order, and did not measure up to their expectations. He ate with publicans and sinners, saying that the Son of man was come to seek and to save that which is lost. He disregarded their narrow notions about the Sabbath day and healed many on that day, showing that God gave him the power to heal on the Sabbath. The

Pharisees represented the National Party in politics and religion, and were a very religious people; but they failed to grasp the idea that God loved Gentiles, as well as Hebrews, and that love in the heart was better than obeying the letter of the law and the doctrine.

THE SADDUCEES

At this time the Sadducees were in power at Jerusalem. Annas and Caiaphas and the sons of Annas were all high priests at one time or another; and all were Sadducees. The Sadducees were the Jewish aristocrats who exalted the written law of Moses and denied subsequent tradition. They did not believe in the resurrection of the dead nor in angels, and engaged in business with Gentiles. They were proud and arrogant, and looked upon Jesus as a fanatic. They upheld Roman authority and did not hesitate to bribe and stoop to chicanery to maintain their hold on the priesthood, from which the chief priests derived much gain. They were in sympathy with Greek thought and wanted to introduce Greek ideas into the Hebrew state. They were no longer heard of after the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

THE SCRIBES

The laws given to Moses were written in a language no longer spoken by the great body of the Jews. It was necessary for men of learning to make plain the law of Moses and the priestly additions which had been made by way of explanation. The *Scribes* were the Jewish lawyers and theologians and teachers of the law, who made plain to the people what was required of them in their daily living. This was done on Sabbath days in houses of worship called *synagogues*.

Jesus condemned the Scribes along with the Pharisees because of their narrowness and bigotry. They stickled for the minutest details of doctrine and "analyzed the Mosaic law to death." They were bigots for the ceremonies, but many of them lacked love and sympathy for those who needed help. Most of the Scribes were Pharisees.

THE COMMON MAN

In the time of Jesus the common man was hardly thought worthy of notice by those in control of affairs. Only those who had power, or authority, or wealth were thought worthy of consideration. Jesus elevated the common man, and today we recognize him as the most important factor in a nation. Jesus associated with all classes, and offered hope to those who occupied the lowest rung in the social ladder. He restored the sick, touched the loathesome leper, preached his message to the poor, and to a woman of ill repute proclaimed himself the Messiah.

In his day the Hebrews were the narrowest and most intolerant of all peoples. Jesus preached love and tolerance. They hated all of the Gentile world. Jesus preached the gospel of salvation for all, and to the woman of Samaria he said, "The hour cometh when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem worship the Father. . . . God is a spirit; and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." What man of that intolerant time could have ascribed such a statement to Jesus if he had never made it?

Jesus told his followers that he would conquer the world by way of the cross. His disciples who had looked for great elevation when he would triumph over his enemies, were astonished at his words. After all has taken place, we can readily see how it all happened; but living at the time of his disciples, we would have been as short-sighted as they were. No one in Palestine could rise to his sublime thought. Only the common people understood his love and sympathy. All the men of culture (?) were against him. Who was able to create a sublime "Myth" about him? Who proclaimed the gospel which is the salvation of the nations in this century and in a thousand centuries to come? It was Jesus, who showed God to the people of this world.

COMPLIMENTS

Even sceptics and severest critics pay Jesus high compliments. Their little systems of thought have had their day and passed away.

"Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be."

Spinoza spoke of Jesus as "the truest symbol of heavenly wisdom." Renan said, "His beauty is eternal; his reign shall never end." Rosseau said, "If Socrates lived and died like a sage, Jesus lived and died like a God." Strauss spoke of him as "The being without whose presence in the mind perfect piety is impossible." Kant, as he grew older, was seized with increasing reverence; and when an author associated his name too closely with that of Jesus on the same page, he demurred, saying, that he was but a poor bungler trying to interpret him.

But when all is said and done, which of us by thinking about it can make himself a foot taller? Sophists have thought to come to a knowledge of God by subtle thinking: one can learn more about God at a rummage sale, where poor mothers are trying to do the best for their children with the little money they have to spend. Durant says, "The conception of man as above all a thinking animal, fell sick with Rosseau, took to bed with Kant and died with Schopenhauer." No, we shall never reach our heavenly home by thinking alone. If that were the way, many poor reasoners would stand no show at all. THE WAY OF THE CROSS LEADS HOME.

WHO THEN IS JESUS?

Jesus spoke with authority: "Ye have heard it said by them of old time . . . but I say unto you . . ." We recognize the words of Jesus as the words of God. Seers and prophets have, in part, spoken for God; but Jesus came to show God to the people of this world. In Him we have the full revelation. He was the child of the Spirit, the perfect man, the Son of God, our Teacher, our Master, our Savior.

CHAPTER I.

ZACHARIAS, THE PRIEST

Luke 1:5-25 *and* 57-80

THE priests who ministered in the temple at Jerusalem were descendants of Aaron, the brother of Moses. They were divided into twenty-four families. Zacharias was of the course of Abia, the eighth family, and during the week when the priests of his family were to be in the temple, he was chosen by lot to burn the incense on the altar and to bless the worshippers. His wife, Elizabeth, was also of a priestly family, and they were both old. They lived at or near Hebron, in the hill country, about fifteen miles from Jerusalem, where many priestly families lived. They had no children, and had often prayed for a child when they were younger; but they no longer expected a child.

While Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, and a large multitude were praying, there appeared to him the angel Gabriel standing at the right of the altar. Zacharias was afraid, and the angel told him not to fear— "For thy prayer is heard, and Elizabeth shall bear thee a son; and thou shalt call his name *John*."

> "And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. And many of the Children of Israel shall be turned to the Lord their God . . ."

And Zacharias said to the angel, "Whereby shall I know this; for I am an old man, and my wife is well stricken in years?" An angel had told him these things, and yet he wanted to see a sign. He should have believed immediately. The angel said that he would be dumb until these things came to pass. He must have been sorry in the days of his silence to have doubted what the angel said.

The people at prayer were wondering why Zacharias did not come to dismiss them with a blessing. When he came out he could not speak, and made signs to show that he had seen a vision. The people left the temple awe-struck, wondering what the vision should mean. Zacharias went to his home, and in writing reported to Elizabeth the wonderful message the angel had given him; and sadly told her why he was dumb. He had to write, for he remained dumb until his son John was eight days old. Then the child was to be named, and they asked him in writing what the name of the baby should be. He wrote, "His name is John." And his mouth was opened, and he praised God. He was filled with the Holy Spirit, and spoke of the Savior who was coming; and that John should prepare the way for the Savior by telling the people to repent of their sins.

There were many neighbors present, and fear came upon them. What Zacharias said was "noised abroad throughout all the hill country of Judea," and, of course, was spoken of in Jerusalem. The priests would learn from Zacharias all that the angel had told him, and they would look forward more than ever to the Christ that was to come.

We must remember, however, that thirty years would pass by before John would begin to preach in the wilderness of Judea; and by that time Zacharias and most of the priests of his day would be dead. In the meantime the child John "grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his showing unto Israel."

MARY

Long before Jesus came to the earth, God made known to holy men who loved Him that some day He would send to the earth a Savior. These holy men wrote on scrolls what God told them, and teachers taught the people what was written on the scrolls. There were thousands of people among the Israelites who were waiting for the Savior to come, and were watching for signs of his coming. The wise men of other nations who had read the writings of the Old Testament prophets, also believed that the time was at hand for the coming of a Great One in Israel to lead and instruct the world.

Among the people who were waiting for the Savior to come was a girl named Mary. Perhaps, she wondered who would be found worthy to become the mother of the Savior. We should like to know much about her, but we know little for sure. The gospels do not tell us about her younger days. It would appear that on her mother's side, she was descended from a priestly family; and on her father's side, she was a lineal descendant of King David. She had reason to be proud of her lineage, but she was very poor. Such parents would be sure to give their daughter the best religious training, which is a gift far better than silver and gold. There is reason for believing that Mary's parents lived in Jerusalem when she was a child; that they died before she reached her teens, and that she was then in charge of a relative living in Nazareth. At least, there was no mother to advise her, and she had to decide things for herself.

There lived in Nazareth, a young man named Joseph, who, also, was a descendant of King David, and poor. Mary consented to be betrothed to him. He was a just man; worthy to be Mary's protector in the days that were to come. Their relationship when engaged was as sacred as if already married; the bond could only be dissolved by divorce; yet months might intervene between betrothal and marriage.

One day the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, and said, "Hail, thou that are highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women." Mary was afraid, and did not fully understand what the angel said. The angel told her not to fear; for God was pleased with her, and she would be the mother of the Savior; and the child should be named *Jesus;* who was to be called the Son of the Highest! Mary was also told that her cousin Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, in her old age, should give birth to a son; that, "with God nothing is impossible." Then Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." And the angel departed.

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH

Luke 1:39-55

There was no one in Nazareth to whom Mary wished to speak about the wonderful message the angel had brought her. Cousin Elizabeth, the wife of Zacharias, was the only person in whom she could confide; because she would understand and appreciate the message. So Mary went to the hill country in haste to visit her cousin. Zacharias was still dumb at the time of Mary's visit. Mary knew the place of their abode, and must have visited them at times before she moved to Nazareth.

No doubt, Elizabeth had more of this world's goods than

Mary had, for Mary was very poor. Mary probably helped Elizabeth in her household work, and Elizabeth in turn gave Mary such things as she much needed, and honored her greatly, because she was to be the mother of her Lord.

When Mary came to the home of Elizabeth and greeted her, the babe leaped in Elizabeth's womb, and she was filled with the Holy Spirit, and said with a loud voice:

> "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her of the Lord."

This greeting of Elizabeth, who knew not of the angel's visit to Mary, must have greatly encouraged Mary; and filled with the Spirit, Mary replied:

> "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Savior; for he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is his name. And his mercy is on them that fear him from generation to generation. He hath showed strength with his arm; he hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree. He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away. He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy; as he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed forever."

These beautiful words of joy and praise, known as the *Magnificat,* were spoken by Mary, and then the curtain went down on all the events that took place during Mary's stay at the home of Elizabeth. Both Zacharias and Elizabeth must have appreciated much her stay with them. Only three persons in all the world knew that the Messiah was at hand.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Matthew 1:18-25; *Luke* 2:1-7

The time was at hand for Mary to return to Nazareth to fulfill her promise to Joseph. They were soon married, and lived in a humble home. Joseph was a carpenter by trade, and built houses and wagons, and made yokes for oxen, and many other things.

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city." The Jews were ordered to register their names on the tax-rolls in the towns where their forefathers had lived. So Joseph and Mary, who were both descended from King David, had to register in Bethlehem, where King David's family used to live.

No doubt, they were thinking of leaving Nazareth anyway. They knew of the prophecy that the Savior should be born in Bethlehem, and had been making preparation to leave Nazareth. Being a carpenter, Joseph may have prepared a vehicle sufficiently large for Mary and such belongings as they wished to take with them. Or, they may have traveled on donkeys. December comes in the cold rainy season, and Joseph would see to it that Mary was well protected from the cold and the rain. The journey would occupy about four days.

They came to Bethlehem rather late, and the room in the Inn and in other houses had been taken by others who had come to register. There was a cave stable used for the protection of cattle in bad weather, to which Joseph was probably directed by the keeper of the Inn. This was preferable to the crowded Inn with its noise. It was private.

That night the cry of a baby was heard in the stable, for Jesus was born. His mother wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, in a nest of hay, where he kept warm.

BETHLEHEM

(Birth of Christianity)

"O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie:
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by.
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight."

"For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the king,
And peace to men on earth."

—PHILLIPS BROOKS.

THE SHEPHERDS OF BETHLEHEM

Luke 2:8-20

On the night when Jesus was born, there were shepherds watching their flocks in a field near Bethlehem. The shepherds may have been looking at the wonderful starry sky, and may have been talking about the Messiah that was to come.

Suddenly a great surprise came to them—the angel of the Lord came near to them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and the shepherds were much afraid. The angel told them not to fear; for he had brought good news for everybody. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace, goodwill, toward men'."

This shows that the coming of Jesus was to bring peace to men. Jesus is often called The Prince of Peace. He wants all the people of the earth to love each other and not engage in war. The day is coming when wars shall cease. The kingdom of Jesus is gaining ground in the hearts of men.

After the angels left, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem. They knew about the cave stable, and soon found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. They were very happy and told Mary and Joseph all the angel had said, and about the angel choir. "Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart." When the shepherds went out, they told all whom they met about the Savior that had just been born, and how the angels had told them about it. No doubt, knowledge of this came to the priests, and fearing Herod, they would ask the people to keep silence. There were those who were waiting to see the babe when he would be brought to the temple.

"There is a tumult of joy
  O'er the wonderful birth,
For the virgin's sweet boy
  Is the Lord of the earth.

Aye! the star rains its fire while the beautiful sing,
For the manger of Bethlehem cradles a king!

"In the light of that star
Lie the ages impearled;
And that song from afar
Has swept over the world.
Every hearth is aflame, and the beautiful sing,
In the homes of the nations that Jesus is King."
—Josiah G. Holland.

BABY JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Luke 2:21-38

Mary, as a Jewish mother, would observe the Jewish custom, just as other Jewish mothers did. When Jesus was eight days old, he was given his name, as the angel had commanded. When he was forty days old, they took him to the temple at Jerusalem to present him to the Lord, and then bought him back with five silver shekels; as was the law of payment for the first born. Joseph then took charge of Jesus, while Mary went into the court of the women to make her offering for purification; which for the poor was a pair of turtle doves, or two young pigeons. If Joseph and Mary had been rich, they would have offered a lamb for sacrifice.

At this time there was a very old man in the temple, whose name was Simeon. He was a holy man, and the Holy Spirit told him that he would not die before he had seen the Christ. When the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Simeon took him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Joseph and Mary were surprised at the words that Simeon spoke. Then Simeon blessed them, and he said to Mary, "Behold this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign that shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

There was also a widow named Anna, who worshipped God in the temple every day. She was eighty-four years old; and when she saw Jesus, she told the people in the temple that Jesus was the Savior for whom the people were waiting.

Joseph and Mary went back to Bethlehem with Jesus in their arms. We may be sure that they rehearsed again and again the words that Simeon and Anna spoke in the temple, as they walked along the way.

THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

Matthew 2:1-12

When Jesus was a babe in Bethlehem, wise men came from the East to visit him. These men probably came from Persia or Arabia. They studied the stars to find out what was to happen on the earth. Such persons were called *Astrologers* or *Magi.*

One night these men saw a new star in the sky, which interested them very much. It was in the direction of Jerusalem; and they decided that this star was the star of the Christ, for whom holy men were looking. They thought that if they went in the direction of the star, they would come to the place where He was born. So they came to Jerusalem, riding on their camels, and asked the guard, as they passed through the eastern gate, "Where is he that is born king of the Jews? We have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him."

"When Herod, the king, heard what the wise men said, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him." He had killed others whom he thought were scheming to take the power from him, and he was anxious to locate this new King of the Jews. He called a meeting of the Jewish leaders, and demanded where Christ should be born. They told him "In Bethlehem of Judea."

Then Herod called the wise men to him, privately, and asked them when they first saw the star. He told them to go to Bethlehem and search diligently for the young child; "And when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also." How deceitful! He did not wish to worship; for he was very wicked. He wanted to kill the baby.

After the wise men got outside of Jerusalem, in the open country, they saw the star again, "And rejoiced with exceeding great joy." They soon came to Bethlehem, which is some five miles south of Jerusalem. Mary and Joseph were now living in a house, and "when the wise men came to the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, frankincense, and myrrh."

They did not go home by way of Jerusalem, for they had been warned by God in a dream not to return to Herod. They probably left the country as quickly as possible. They also may have been notified by leaders of the Jews of Herod's cruelty and deceitfulness; for they would want to protect their King. This visit of the magi must have created a great stir among the Jewish leaders. They were looking for one to deliver them from the Roman yoke. We would expect them to have men follow the magi at a distance to find out where their King was located, in order to assist him to escape.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT, AND THE MURDER OF THE INNOCENTS

Matthew 2:12-23

After the wise men had departed, "The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, 'Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there till I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him'." Joseph left Bethlehem by night, and arrived safe in Egypt with Mary and Jesus. There may have been good friends to help them escape. In Egypt, there were thousands of Jews; but these may not have known anything of the escape of the holy family from the domain of Herod. We know nothing for sure about their stay in Egypt, though there are many stories narrating wonderful things that are said to have happened.

When Herod found that the wise men did not return to tell him where Jesus was, he became very angry, and sent soldiers to Bethlehem to kill all the boy babies under two years of age. These were the first martyrs for Jesus. They did not live to yell, "Crucify him," along with the men of their generation thirty years later (all of whom were forgiven).

Herod was jealous, revengeful, and deceitful; with a heart full of wickedness. To gain favor with the Jews, he built the magnificent temple of white marble at Jerusalem with their money. He adorned other cities with beautiful buildings: but the welfare of a people does not lie in material things. Righteousness exalteth a nation. The temple and the other beautiful structures were leveled with the ground before seventy-five years rolled round.

When we think of Herod, we are reminded of this verse of a litany:

"From all pride and vain conceit;
From all spite and angry heat;
From all lying and deceit—
Save us, good Lord."

When Joseph was informed of the death of Herod, his thought was to return to Bethlehem. "And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither. And being warned of God, he turned aside into Galilee, and came to Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, 'He shall be called a Nazarene'."

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

The gospels tell very little about the childhood of Jesus. They tell about Jesus as a man and about his teachings. We know that his mother would do the best for him that she could; her love for him was wonderful. Joseph was a devout man, and the influence of the home was distinctly religious.

We can imagine to some extent the scenes in Joseph's home. There was the carpenter shop in which Joseph earned his livelihood for the family. Jesus would play in the shop, while Mary would spin at some place where she could keep watch over him. There were probably dove's nests about the shop, and Jesus would hear the cooing of the doves. They would also have chickens, and Jesus would see the mother hen gather her chicks under her wings, a wonderful example of care and protection which he would never forget. In speaking of the people of Jerusalem before he was crucified, he said, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem . . . how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Jesus saw his mother knead dough, and bake bread in the clay oven in the yard. She would show him that yeast raises dough; an example he would make use of in his teaching. He saw his mother spin, and patch torn garments. We believe that he was a great favorite among the children of his neighborhood, and that he played with many boys and girls and was leader in the games.

At the age of six, Jesus was probably sent to the synagogue school in Nazareth. After he learned to read, he was taught from the Old Testament up to the age of ten. From the age of ten to fifteen he was taught the traditional law. He did not attend the rabbinic schools. He did not sit at the feet of some great rabbi as Saul of Tarsus did, but he spoke Aramaic and could probably read Greek and Hebrew. He was exceptionally bright and must have had access to the Scriptures in his home, for he knew them so well. He used to say to the Scribes and Pharisees, later, in his ministry "Have ye not read . . . ?"

When a small child, Jesus sat with His mother in the part of the synagogue reserved for women, which was screened from the part occupied by the men. When he became older, he sat with Joseph on the men's side of the house. We think of him as a meek obedient child, who listened attentively to the teachings of the elders and the Scribes. "The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE AT THE AGE OF TWELVE

Luke 2:41-52

"His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when he was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast." At the age of thirteen, a Jewish boy became a son of the law, and was from henceforth responsible for his actions. Joseph being a very devout man, would at this time give Jesus all the instruction that it fell to his duty to give. As a very conscientious boy, Jesus would be impressed more than ever with the happenings in the temple. He would want to learn all that he could. His thoughts centered in the temple where he would listen with rapt attention to what the doctors of the law might have to say. He hardly noticed the preparations that were being made to return to Nazareth. The doctors would be much attracted to this intelligent youth with the winsome face. No wonder they would engage him in conversation. They knew that "the king of the Jews" for whom Herod had sought was somewhere; and might this be he?

The group of people going toward Nazareth started for home, his parents supposing that he was with the younger people of the caravan. When arrangements were made to rest at the end of the first day's journey, they found that Jesus was not in the company, and Mary and Joseph turned back to Jerusalem, seeking him. On the third day of their search, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions. And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers. "And when they saw him, they were amazed: and his mother said unto him, 'Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing'." Jesus replied, "How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" It is a long distance from a far-away God who must be appeased with sacrifices, to the loving heavenly Father with whom Jesus communed.

Already, at the age of twelve, Jesus began to show God to the people of this world. "They understood not the saying which he spake unto them."

Jesus went with Joseph and Mary to Nazareth and obeyed them; "But his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man."

We must not think of Jesus as knowing everything from the beginning. As a boy he thought as a boy. He increased in wisdom. But, already at the age of twelve, a bright boy senses spiritual values as well as in later years. His spirit unfolded as his body grew. Mary and Joseph could not keep pace with this unfolding, and they were amazed.

JESUS, THE CARPENTER

Mark 6:3

We know little about the life of Jesus from the time he was twelve years of age until he was thirty, but we do know that he was a carpenter. When Jesus preached in the synagogue of Nazareth, the people of Nazareth said, "Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary . . . ?" Joseph was no longer living, or they would have said *Joseph* instead of *Mary*.

When Jesus preached that sermon, the people could not understand how a man who had been but a carpenter could have such great wisdom, and do the miracles which He did. He was taught of God, and had knowledge which the teachers of his day did not possess. He learned a trade, as other Jewish boys were required to do. He worked with his hands to make a living, and he was poor. He made toil and poverty sacred. Any man who despises the poor workingman, does not have the spirit of Jesus in him. Any person who thinks himself above working with his hands, is not an intelligent follower of Jesus. If the Holy Spirit is in a person, it exalts him, and it makes no difference if he be a carpenter or a king. The many millions of humble toilers throughout the world have a friend in Jesus, who has sympathy for them in their struggle to make an honest living.

It makes all the difference whether the Spirit of God controls our lives or not. Jesus had the Spirit in him, and we are sure that no person ever came to his carpenter shop and went away without being better for having met Jesus. We are also sure of another thing—Jesus worked honestly. He did not slight his work. He gave full measure in all his transactions.

We know that Jesus was very intelligent at the age of twelve; and he became wiser as he grew to manhood. Often, after he finished the day's work, he studied the Scriptures, and he understood them better than any other living soul. He must have had lots of friends among the children, for he loved them. He must have told them stories, and tried to make them happy. His good life left its impress on his face; and when he came to John to be baptized, John, looking on that face, said, "I have need to be baptized of thee."

Jesus, also, was fond of flowers and birds, and all the other beautiful things in nature. The Holy Spirit in him enabled him to see the beauty in the things that God had made. He also saw the wickedness of the people of Nazareth, but much more did he see the good in them. Jesus did much thinking as he worked. He met Greeks, and Asiatics of different nationalities; and among them he found people who wanted to do right; who did not have any faith in false gods. These should be saved, as well as Israelites. Jesus loved them.

CHAPTER II.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 3:1-12; *Mark* 1:1-8; *Luke* 3:1-18

When Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, was filled with the Spirit on the day John was named, he said, "And thou child shalt be called the prophet of the Highest, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways." The time had come for John to act. "And the word of God came to John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness," where John lived out of doors, drank no wine, and ate locusts and wild honey. He was dressed in rough cloth made of camel's hair, belted with a leathern girdle. His face was tanned and his hair unshorn. He went up and down the country crying, "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven it as hand."

John's message aroused all classes of people. Many thought that the time was at hand for the overthrow of the Roman power. These thought of the kingdom of heaven as an earthly kingdom, ruled by a king of Israel. When they came to John, he asked them to repent of their sins. He baptized in the Jordan, and those who were willing to forsake their sins and lead a better life were baptized.

All classes flocked to John; many out of curiosity. They wanted to hear and see the fiery prophet from the wilderness. He told them some plain truths very bluntly. Among those who came to be baptized were Pharisees and Sadducees. He said to these, "O generation of vipers, who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance; and think not to say within yourselves, 'We have Abraham for our father'; for

I say unto you that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I; whose shoes I am not worthy to carry: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. . . . He will gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. . . . Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is cut down, and cast into the fire."

The people wanted to know what they were to do to escape the punishment of which Jesus spoke. John replied that he that has two coats should give to him that has none, and he that has food should give to him that has none. The publicans asked what they should do. John told them to take no more tax money from the people than they had a right to collect. Herod's soldiers asked what they should do. John told them to do violence to no man, to stop plundering, and to be satisfied with their wages.

The Sanhedrin at Jerusalem sent men to ask him who he was. John said that he was not the Christ, neither was he Elijah returned to earth, as some thought. He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as sayeth the prophet Isaiah." They asked why he baptizes with water if he is not the Christ. John answered that there was one among them, whom they did not know, whose shoe's latchet he was not worthy to unloose, and that he baptized with water in order that that one might be made manifest to Israel.

When John cried that the kingdom of heaven is at hand, Mary's heart must have beat faster if she remembered the words of Simeon in the temple—"This child is for a sign that shall be spoken against; yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also."

In baptizing, John came as far north as Bethabara, and Jesus went forth to hear John preach. He would be expected to return in a few days, as many of his neighbors had done.

Jesus did not come to John to confess his sins, for he was sinless. He came that he might be made manifest to Israel. "Now when all the people were baptized," Jesus also came to be baptized. As John looked on that face of spotless purity, he said, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" "Let it be so now," said Jesus; "for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Then John baptized his Savior. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: and, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'."

This showed that Jesus was the Christ; and John bare witness, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode on him. I saw and bare record that this is the Son of God." Later, when John saw Jesus walking, he said to two of his disciples, "Behold the Lamb of God."

John might have called men to repentance without baptizing them with water; but God chose this method of making his son manifest to Israel. "He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, 'Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he that baptizeth with the Holy Ghost'."

So, we see the reason why John baptized with water. It was to show that Jesus is the Christ. Jesus never baptized anyone with water; but his followers have done so. Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Let us seek after spiritual baptism, so that we may have a strong desire to please God in every way.

After John baptized Jesus his work was done. Let us remember that John was only the forerunner. He said that Jesus must increase and he must decrease. Jesus became the great teacher of the people, who followed him to hear him preach and to see him do wonderful miracles of healing.

JESUS TEMPTED IN THE WILDERNESS

Matthew 4:1-11; *Mark* 1:12-23; *Luke* 4:1-13

The spirit of selfishness and pride and worldly pleasure; the spirit which leads men to choose ignoble things and to cast aside things of high spiritual value; the spirit which suggests low motives instead of exalted ideals—this spirit personified is called *satan*, or the *devil*. We have all been tempted to follow the leadings of this evil spirit.

After Jesus was baptized, he was driven by the Spirit into the wilderness, where he remained forty days. He spent the time in prayer and fasting and in thinking about what God would have him do. He had heard the voice of God says that he was his beloved Son; and as such, he knew that God would give him great power. The thought in his mind was how best to use this power to honor God.

Jesus had become very hungry and weak from fasting so long. Then satan, the evil spirit, tempted him, saying, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread," Jesus recognized this as a suggestion of the evil spirit, and replied, "It is written that man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." Spiritual food is more necessary than physical food. Satan rules millions of people through their physical appetites. Jesus put the demands of the Spirit above the appetites of the body. The personal liberty crowd, who want their appetites to have free rein, are the opposites of Jesus, who puts spiritual values above material things.

Then satan tempted Jesus in another way. He showed Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, and told him that he would make him ruler over all these if he would worship him. In other words, the thought came to Jesus that he might establish a great kingdom in which he would reign in earthly splendor and great glory and power. Jesus replied to this suggestion, as follows: "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Jesus had been a poor man, and he might now take unto himself great riches and power. That is what millions of people are striving for continually and neglecting better things. They want riches, pleasure and power, and count it as success if they get these. You hear young people say that they do not want to be teachers or preachers, because they would not make much money. God honors a person who chooses a calling in which he or she may be of great use to his kingdom. Close the churches and the schools, and the nation will be headed for destruction. The spiritual forces in a nation are of first importance. Jesus set a great example for us all. It is best to sevre God.

Satan tempted Jesus once more, and this time he quoted scripture. Jesus, in thought, is supposed to be on top of the temple at Jerusalem, and satan says to him, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence: for it is written 'He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee, and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone'." Jesus replied, "It is said, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God'."

Satan saw that he had no power over Jesus, and he departed from him.

Jesus was familiar with the thought of the rabbins, who expected a great world king to rule in Jerusalem. The rabbins thought that the Messiah would first appear on the roof of the temple, and there God would exalt his Christ before the nations of the world. He could step off the temple without harm and appear in the midst of the worshippers, demonstrating his power and meeting with their acclaim. The kingdom of God would begin right there. That would be in keeping with the Jewish conception of the Christ. Jesus was filled with the Spirit, and he followed the leadings of the Spirit. He came to establish the kingdom of God in the hearts of men; not to reign in regal splendor in a world-wide kingdom.

Jesus was human, and suffered hunger and pain, and was capable of sinning. He was tempted and sinned not.

"Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin."

DISCIPLES OF JESUS

John 1:37-51

Those who follow the teachings of a person are called disciples or followers. Some of the disciples of John became disciples of Jesus. When Jesus returned from the wilderness, where he had won the great victory over temptation, John pointing to him said to two of his disciples who were with him, "Behold the Lamb of God." These two disciples, Andrew and John, followed Jesus; who turning about, said, "Whom seek ye?" They said, "Master, where dwellest thou?" Jesus said, "Come, and see." They went with him and stayed with him that day.

After staying with Jesus for the day, they were both convinced that he was the Christ, and they each started out to find his brother. Andrew came first with his brother Simon. When Jesus looked on that big strong man, he said, "Thou art Simon, the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Peter," which means a stone. John out of modesty does not say that he brought his brother James. The next day, on his way to Galilee, Jesus found Philip, who was also from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael of Cana, and told him that they "had found him of whom Moses in the Law and Prophets did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael may have known of Joseph, who lived only about four miles from Cana. Nathanael said, "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip said, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming, and said to him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael wanted to know how Jesus knew him. Jesus said, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree I saw thee." From what Jesus said, Nathanael concluded that Jesus knew his very thoughts, and he said, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou are the King of Israel." Jesus replied that he would see greater things than these.

These were the first six disciples, and these six were numbered among the twelve apostles, who were chosen to be with Jesus continually later on.

Jesus had been absent from Nazareth over six weeks, and was on his way back to see his mother. He took his disciples with him. There was a guest room on the roof of the house, which was at their disposal. They would not stay long, for all were invited to a wedding in Cana, where Nathanael lived, the next day. Probably, Nathanael did not stay over night with Jesus, and took several of the disciples with him to his home. John would surely be among the ones who stayed with Jesus; and we believe that Mary became much attached to this youngest of the disciples.

FIRST MIRACLE AT CANA

John 2:1-11

Mary had been invited to a wedding at Cana; probably, because she was a relative of either the bride or the bridegroom. When it became known that Jesus with disciples had returned to the home of Mary, the invitation was extended to them, and they went to the wedding.

In those days, a wedding was a joyous affair, and there was always a wedding feast at which good things to eat and to drink were served to people who were invited. Friends would meet at the home of the bride and conduct her to the home of the bridegroom. This would be on a Wednesday evening, if the bride was not a widow. Marriage papers would be signed in the presence of friends; then after the washing of hands and the blessing, the marriage supper would begin.

The bridegroom would want to have as big a wedding as possible, and would provide wine and food, as he could afford. Perhaps, the coming of Jesus and the six disciples upset the calculations. None of these men had been followers of Jesus for more than three days before the wedding, and all arrangements for the wedding had been made previous to their coming to Nazareth. However that may be, before the feast was over, the servants whispered that the wine was about all used. This would be very embarrassing to the family of the bridegroom and to the bride, if it became known; and one of the servants told Mary.

Mary knew that Jesus could help in such a situation, and she went to him and whispered that the wine was all gone. Jesus said, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” This seems like a harsh statement, but it was not so intended. In speaking to her from the cross, he said, “Woman, behold thy son,” and we know that he who had kind words for the thief would have none but kind words for his mother. She knew that his ministry had begun, for he had already won six disciples. We also know that Mary had done nothing to merit a rebuke, and she showed her confidence in Jesus. She, at least, was satisfied with what he said, and told the servants to do whatever he commands.

Jesus stepped outside into the court where there were six water-jars standing which held water for washing before meals. The servants were directed to fill the jars. They filled them to the brim. Then Jesus told them to “draw out now and bear to the governor of the feast.” When he tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not where it had been obtained, the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and said unto him, “Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now.” The servants told everyone how the water from the well was changed to wine as they carried it; and the people knew that a great miracle had been wrought by Jesus. “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed in him.”

Jesus performed nearly all his miracles out of sympathy. Most of them were miracles of healing. He changed the water into wine, because he wanted the parents, the bride, the bridegroom, his mother and other guests, to be happy. Jesus has wonderful love and sympathy for people. He is your friend.

How different Jesus' ministry was from that of John. John lived the hermit life, drank no wine, and ate the simplest food. His life was unsocial. Jesus mixed with the multitude, and did his first miracle at a wedding banquet. Christians are to enter into life and not to withdraw from it. Jesus said, "I came that ye might have life and have it more abundantly." He frowned upon vice, but he dignified innocent pleasures. He was not constantly reminding the people of the law and the doctrine. Moses gave the law, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

CLEANSING THE TEMPLE

John 2:12-22

From Cana, Jesus, his disciples, his mother and his brethren went down to Capernaum, which was on the way to Jerusalem. The disciples probably introduced Jesus to their families, and Mary remained with relatives, while Jesus, his disciples and his brethren and other Galileans went up to Jerusalem to the feast of the Passover.

Already, a month before the Passover, Jewish money-changers were in the towns exchanging Jewish half-shekels for other money. Each Jew or proselyte (women, children and slaves excepted), had to pay the annual tribute of a half-shekel into the temple treasury. There were also money-changers in Jerusalem to accommodate the foreign Jews. When Jesus came to the temple, "He found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting." The temple money-changers had a bad reputation. Their word was not accepted in court. They were swindlers and tricksters. Only Jewish money was accepted as tribute. That money was considered sacred, and foreigners were compelled to go to the money-changers to have their money exchanged. This business should have been transacted outside of the temple area.

Imagine the scene as Jesus looked on at that time. There would be much wrangling between the money-changers and their victims. Add to this the noise of those who were bargaining for sheep or cattle or doves: also, there was bleating of sheep, lowing of cattle and the noise of people calling to one another. The presence of animals also implies the presence of dung and stench—all this in the court of the gentiles.

Jesus had seen this already as a boy, and what he saw now gave him no surprise: "and when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables; and said unto them that sold doves, 'Take these things hence; make not my Father's house a house of merchandise'."

The priests were anxious about having sacred money with which to buy offerings and pay the temple tax, but they did not keep the house of God sacred. A church is a sacred place, and should not be used like a store in which to buy and sell things. Why did not the high priest keep the house of God sacred? Because he and his relatives made lots of money out of the temple business. Those who did business in the temple had to pay large money for the privilege. Even now large money is paid for protection to those in authority by those who are carrying on bad business. This is an old game.

The people were with Jesus in this matter of cleansing the temple. They knew of the sinful greed of the temple robbers, and their business was unpopular. There was no opposition; for "the wicked flee when no man pursueth." There was also a majesty in his bearing which disarmed all opposition. Perhaps, the big Galileans were also an influence. It is a wonder that the soldiers in the tower of Antonia were not called in to quell the disturbance.

Of course, the people who were chased out of the temple appealed to the temple officials, who gathered up courage to ask Jesus, "What sign showeth thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?" Jesus answered by saying, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." They replied, "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?" He spoke of the temple of his body, and neither these officials nor his disciples at the time understood him; but his disciples understood after he rose from the dead.

What happened at the temple was talked about all over Jerusalem, and Jesus had made both friends and enemies by cleansing the temple.

While in Jerusalem, Jesus did miracles, and preached to the people; many believed in his name. Those who think of Jesus as a frail man are wrong in their thinking. He was strong in body and in spirit. The cleansing of the temple was a strong man's job.

NICODEMUS

John 3:1-21

Nicodemus was one of the rulers of the Jews, a member of the Sanhedrin. He heard Jesus preach, and saw the miracles he performed. He was a Pharisee who knew the law of Moses; but he was not satisfied, and came to Jesus by night to ask him some questions, and to find out more about the gospel that Jesus preached. He was a man of wide learning, who had been trained in the higher Jewish academies, and he recognized Jesus as a man who had come from God. We shall not accuse him of being a coward for coming at night. He, at least, was not as great a coward as those who feared to come at all, and he may have come at night because he thought that Jesus would have time to talk with him.

He said to Jesus, "Rabbi, we know thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus said nothing about the miracles, but he answered, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus asked how a man can be born again. Jesus said, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." We have all been born of the flesh. We have been babies in mothers' arms, but we must be born of the Spirit. Nicodemus could not understand; and said, "How can these things be?" Jesus said, "Art thou a master in Israel and knowest not these things?" A man who would teach religion should have religion himself. Jesus spoke from experience. He had been baptized with the Spirit, and he knew what he was talking about.

Then Jesus gave this message to Nicodemus and to the world: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD, THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOSOEVER BELIEVETH IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. After Jesus was crucified, Nicodemus understood the message, and became a believer. We know that he brought myrrh and aloes and helped Joseph of Arimathea to prepare the body of Jesus for the tomb after he had been crucified.

We can be sure of one thing—Jesus loved Nicodemus, and was glad to tell him the way of salvation. We believe that Nicodemus thanked Jesus and went on his way believing that Jesus was the Messiah that had been foretold.

JOHN'S TESTIMONY TO JESUS

John 3:22-36

Jesus' doctrine of the new birth did not appeal to the Pharisees, who were sticklers for forms and ceremonies. Neither were they pleased with John, who called them a "generation of vipers." They would make trouble for both Jesus and John whenever they got a chance. Jesus did not stay long in Jerusalem, and went to the country of northeast Judea with his disciples.

It appears that the disciples of Jesus baptized while in this locality, and many people flocked to them to be baptized; more than came to John, who was baptizing farther north on the Jordan. (John had not yet been put in prison.) When the disciples of John learned of this they carried the news to John, perhaps in the language of complaint, thinking that it was not the part of Christ's ministry to baptize with water. Why Jesus allowed his disciples to baptize at this time, we do not know. They did not baptize anywhere else.

If the Pharisees, who had probably told John's disciples, thought to stir up jealousy when his disciples would tell him of Jesus' success, they missed their mark: for John never spoke more beautiful words than in his reply to those who told him of Jesus' success.

John said, "A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from above. Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before him.' He that hath the bride is the bridegroom: but the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegrooms' voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. . . . He that cometh from heaven is above all. . . . He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not on the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

JESUS AT JACOB'S WELL

John 4:1-43

After the Passover feast, the Galileans went home to tell about the cleansing of the temple and the miracles Jesus wrought at the feast, while Jesus and his disciples remained in Judea. The imprisonment of John and the growing hostility of the Judeans, who were influenced by the leaders, may have prompted the return to Galilee. Samaria lies between Judea and Galilee, and the Jews, who hated the Samaritans, generally crossed to the east side of the Jordan to avoid going through Samaria. Jesus did not hate the Samaritans, and passed through Samaria on the way to Galilee.

On his way he came to the town of Sychar, near which Jacob's well is located. He came to the well about six o'clock in the afternoon, tired and thirsty, and he sat on the curb of the well to rest. While he sat there, a woman of Samaria came to draw water, and Jesus asked her for a drink. She saw by his dress that he was a Jew, and was surprised that he asked her for a drink; for the Jews thought themselves so much above the Samaritans that they would have no dealings with them. Jesus said if she knew who he was, she would ask of him and he would give her living water. She said, "Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children and his cattle?" Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up unto everlasting life." Jesus was speaking of the Spirit that he gives to people. The woman asked for some of the water; because she thought that if she never became thirsty, she wouldn't have the trouble to come to the well to draw water. She did not yet understand, and Jesus told her to call her husband. She replied that she did not have any husband. Jesus knew about the woman's life, and said "Thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband." She said, "I perceive that thou art a prophet," and to change the subject, she wanted to know whether it was right to worship God on the mountain where the Samaritans wroshipped or at Jerusalem. Jesus told her that the place makes no difference; the time is here for true worshippers to worship the Father in spirit and in truth. "GOD IS A SPIRIT: AND THEY THAT WORSHIP HIM MUST WORSHIP HIM IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH." The woman then said that when Christ comes, he will tell us all things. Jesus said, "I that speak unto thee am he."

When the disciples, who had gone to town to buy food returned, they were surprised that he talked with the woman, but they said nothing. The woman left her waterpot and went her way into the city, and said to the men, "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" In the meantime the disciples offered him food; but he would not eat, saying "My food is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work."

As he saw the men of Sychar drawing near, he spoke of the harvest (of souls) in sight, and said, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal." How will those fare who take no interest in the kingdom, and neither sow nor reap?

When the men came to him, they invited him to come up to the town and tarry with them. Jesus accepted their kind offer, and preached to them; and many believed him to be the Christ, the Savior of the world. He and his disciples stayed two days at Sychar, and then went on to Galilee.

CHAPTER III.

JESUS HEALS THE NOBLEMAN'S SON

John 4:45-54

Nathanael of Cana, probably, was one of Jesus' disciples who had been with him in Judea, and when Jesus returned to Galilee, the disciples who were with him would want to visit their families; for they had been absent some months. In going to Nazareth to visit his mother, Jesus would go with Nathanael to Cana before going on farther to Nazareth.

When the disciples from Capernaum returned home, and it was known there that Jesus had returned to Galilee, a nobleman, one of Herod's officers, whose son was sick and at the point of death, came to Jesus and asked him to come to Capernaum, believing that Jesus could cure him. Jesus said to him, "Unless ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe." The nobleman replied, "Sir, come down ere the child die." Jesus said, "Go thy way, thy son liveth." The nobleman took him at his word, and thereby showed his faith. As he was going down to Capernaum, his servant met him, saying, "Thy son liveth." Upon inquiry, he found that the son improved from the time Jesus said, "Thy son liveth." This led him and all his family to believe in Jesus. There is reason for believing that this nobleman was Herod's steward, and that his wife was one of the women who helped Jesus and his disciples with money and other things needed.

JESUS PREACHES AT NAZARETH

Luke 4:14-32

Since Nazareth is only four miles from Cana, it was probably on the Sabbath following the event just narrated, when Jesus preached in his home town. He would want to visit his mother on the first Sabbath, and go with her to the synagogue, as he used to do. At the door, they would part, and Mary would proceed to the latticed gallery reserved for women, while Jesus would take a seat in the main body of the synagogue, only to be invited by the chief ruler to take a seat of honor facing the congregation. We are sure that he would be honored, for the fame of what he had done at Jerusalem and at Cana had spread to Nazareth. The audience must have been large and eager to hear him, since it would have been noised abroad that he had returned home.

Jesus probably opened the service, and gave the prayer. Others would read from the law, and he would conclude by reading a portion from the Prophets. He read from Isaiah, as follows:

> "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
> Because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel
> to the poor;
> He hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted,
> To preach deliverance to the captives,
> And recovery of sight to the blind,
> To set at liberty them that are bruised,
> To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

"Then he sat down, and the eyes of all them in the synagogue were fastened on him."

Then Jesus said, "This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." In other words, Jesus was doing all that this scripture speaks of. All liked the gracious way in which he spoke; but some said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" Jesus was filled with the Spirit, but they were not. All they thought of was that he was the son of the village carpenter, who used to work for them, and what can he teach them?

If the words a man speaks are true and good, what difference does it make whether he is a carpenter or a king? Do we think less of Abraham Lincoln because he was poor and split rails?

Jesus knew what was passing in their minds, and heard their comments; and he was seized with holy indignation at their unspiritual remarks.

They had heard his words, and now they would want to see some great miracles, because he was in his home town. He should do at least as much as he was reported to have done in other places. That was an uncharitable view. The Christian doctrine is not "Charity begins at home," "Physician heal thyself," "Safety for self first," etc. The Christian doctrine is the law of unselfishness—help others, give, spend, and be spent for the cause of righteousness.

To impress this more charitable view upon his hearers, Jesus brought to their minds their proverb—"Physician heal thyself," and showed by their own scriptures that their greatest prophets did not follow that advice. During a great famine which lasted over three years in the time of the prophet Elijah, that prophet was sent to help only one person, a widow, who lived at Sarepta, a city of Sidon; and she was not an Israelite. There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman, the Syrian; who was not an Israelite.

This made his hearers very angry, and they rose, and thrust him out of the city, and intended to throw him down over a steep cliff to kill him. However, there was something in his countenance which made them hold off, and he passed through their midst and went down to Capernaum to live; where people believed in him, and where he did many miracles of healing.

Mary must have left the synagogue with a heavy heart, and silently went to her home, where she would pour out her sorrow to her heavenly Father.

Jesus could do no miracles in Nazareth, because its people could think only of him as the son of a poor carpenter. They became angry because he quoted scripture that did not exalt Israelites. Jesus showed that God cared for other people as well as for Israelites. They must not think that they have God's favor because they are descended from Abraham. All who turn to the Lord are accepted. The gospel of equal rights is a good gospel. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

HEALING THE IMPOTENT MAN AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

John 5:1-47

Before Jesus called his disciples to be with him all the time, he went about largely unattended. They would be with him on the sabbath days, and on other days they would be busy with their occupations. It was during this period that he attended a feast at Jerusalem.

While Jesus was healing people in Galilee, he did not forget about the spiritual blindness of the leaders in Jerusalem. He must also convince them that he is the Christ; and that is the reason why he was impelled to attend this unknown feast.

There was in Jerusalem a pool called the Pool of Bethesda, surrounded by five porches. On these porches were sick people, who would bathe in the water to be healed when they saw the water move. It would seem that the pool was supplied with water from an intermittent spring, and when the siphon was supplying water, it would cause the water in the pool to bubble and ripple.

The poor sick folk ascribed this movement of the water to the power of God; and so it was, but not in the way they thought. They also thought that the one who first got into the water after it started to move would be healed.

Jesus came along to the pool, and there found a man lying on one of the porches, who had been impotent thirty-eight years. An impotent man is one who has lost his strength. This man told Jesus that every time the water moves, someone steps into the water ahead of him; and that is the reason he had been there such a long time without being cured. Jesus said to the man, "Wilt thou be made whole?" The man replied that there is no one to put him into the pool when the water is troubled. Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up thy bed and walk." The man found that his strength had returned, and he rolled up his couch and walked home.

That happened to be the sabbath day, and the Pharisees who saw him said that it was not lawful to carry a bed on the sabbath. The man replied that the one who cured him told him to carry his bed and walk. The Pharisees asked who the man is; but he did not know, because Jesus had gone away.

Later on, Jesus saw the man in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." Then the man knew that it was Jesus who had cured him, and he told the Pharisees, who wanted to kill Jesus, because he had done this on the sabbath day.

While the Jewish leaders were splitting hairs over the sabbath day, the lame man at the Pool of Bethesda was looking about for help. All their fine-spun theories helped neither him nor them nor anybody else. Let us in these days support all good forces at work to help humanity in its upward struggle, and not split hairs over things that are not important.

Jesus told the Jewish leaders that God was his Father, and that God had given him the power to do such miracles of healing. They should honor the Son, as they honor the Father. He said, "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." He later on, raised Lazarus from the dead to prove it.

John the Baptist had told them that Jesus was the Christ: the miracles were a witness: his doctrine contained the very essence of true religion, and now this cure of the impotent man again showed them the power which God had given him; and yet they rejected him, because their deeds were evil.

Jesus told them that they did not have the love of God in their hearts. That is the kernel of the whole matter.

MIRACULOUS DRAUGHT OF FISHES

Matthew 4:18-22; *Mark* 1:16-20; *Luke* 5:1-11

After Jesus returned from Jerusalem, where he had been attending the feast, "as he walked by the sea of Galilee," the people crowded about him to hear him preach. There were two boats on the shore, one belonging to Peter, and the other to James and John. The fishermen were washing the nets close by. In order to be free of the crowd that was pressing about him, Jesus got into Peter's boat, and asked him to push away a little from the land. That enabled him to see the crowd better, and they could all see him. He sat down to teach, and the people probably sat on the seashore to listen.

When Jesus had finished speaking, he asked Peter to take the boat into deeper water and let down the net for a draught. Peter replied, “We have toiled all night and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.” After they had done this, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. Peter called James and John for help. They came and both boats were filled. Peter felt very sinful in the presence of Jesus, and he fell down at his feet and said, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” All were astonished at the draught of fishes they had taken. Jesus told Peter “not to fear; for, from henceforth he should catch men.” When they had brought their nets to land, they left all to follow him. From this time on they were with Jesus all the time, and fished no longer for a livelihood. When Jesus said, “Follow me,” they were ready to follow; for they had already believed him to be the Messiah, and they were greatly attached to him.

Jesus did this miracle to show the multitude that he was the Messiah. He also had sympathy for the fishermen and their friends on the shore. He wanted to reward the effort that had been put forth. Jesus has great sympathy with all honest efforts of people to get along in this life. Let us not be discouraged when our efforts seem to bear no fruit. The reward will come in time.

When Louis Pasteur, the famous French scientist, toiled in midnight hours, studying how to overcome the germs that cause disease, his work was crowned with success by the Christ whom he served.

A SABBATH IN CAPERNAUM

Matthew 4:13-17; *Mark* 1:21-34; *Luke* 4:31-41

After Jesus left Nazareth, he came to Capernaum to live. He already had good friends in the nobleman’s family, whose son he had healed; and nearby lived John, James, Peter and Andrew. These four, a few days earlier, had obeyed the call to be with Jesus all the time. The synagogue in Capernaum was built by a centurian, whose servant Jesus healed. Jairus was its chief ruler, whose daughter Jesus later on raised from the dead.

On a sabbath, Jesus preached in their synagogue and the people were surprised, because he preached with authority. He knew what he was talking about. The scribes always told the people what was written in the law, but Jesus as God's Son told the people what God wanted them to do and to be.

There was a man in the audience who was controlled by an "unclean spirit," and he became excited and cried out, saying, "Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God!" Jesus knew that an evil spirit had control of the man, and he ordered the spirit to come out of him. The spirit came out, and the man was in his right mind. The people were amazed that Jesus had such power, and they told everybody about it. His fame spread throughout the country.

Nobody knows what unclean spirits are. It seems as if the holy presence of Jesus so aroused the wicked spirit in control of the person that the spirit would use the person's voice and speak out in opposition to Jesus, only to be subdued by him, and cast out by his order. Is it not a fact that in every case when people speak evil, it is the evil in them that is using the voice of the person to express itself?

After church, Jesus with James and John, went into the house of Simon, whose mother-in-law had the fever; and they besought Jesus for her. Jesus took her by the hand

and raised her up, and the fever left her, and she prepared food for them to eat.

The end of a day was at sunset; and those Jews who did not want to bring sick people to Jesus to be healed on the sabbath, came after sunset. There was a great crowd: "All the city was gathered at the door." They had brought people with all kinds of diseases. Some were crazy; some had the palsy, other had diseases which the doctors of that time could not cure. He healed many that day, and his fame spread to Syria, the country north of Palestine. Great crowds followed him. He could easily have collected a great army to fight the Romans, but his kingdom was not one to be established with the sword. He seeks to rule in the lives of people.

One may wonder why there were so many sick and crazy people in the country at that time. They had no hospitals, no asylums, no homes for crippled children and incurables, no institutions for the blind, the deaf and the feeble-minded. It is the spirit of Jesus that has led to the establishment of such institutions in this age. We do not have the power that Jesus had: for, as John the Baptist said, "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." But as Christians, we are to do the best that we can with the power that is given to us.

After this sabbath day, Jesus could no longer find seclusion. He went out early in the morning to a lonely place to think and to pray. There his disciples found him, and told him that everybody was looking for him. The people did not want him to leave Capernaum, but Jesus told them that he must preach in other places, too. He preached in all the synagogues throughout Galilee, and also out of doors.

CLEANSING A LEPER

Matthew 8:1-4; *Mark* 1:40-45; *Luke* 5:12-16

Jesus said to his four disciples, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." And he preached in all the synagogues throughout Galilee, and cast out devils. On the way, he met a leper; who, kneeling down, besought him to heal him, saying, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Lepers went about the country crying "unclean, unclean," and no one was to go nearer than six feet to a leper. They could not be cured, and had no friends except among their own class. How Jesus must have pitied them!

Jesus put forth his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I will, be thou clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was clean. Jesus then told him to say nothing about it to anybody; and he was to show himself to the priest, and "offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." This healed leper would go up to Jerusalem, and show himself to the priests and tell them who cured him. The rulers of the Jews were sending Scribes and Pharisees to watch Jesus; who, in turn, sent a healed leper to them. Of what value was the Mosaic law to a leper before he was cleansed? It could not cleanse one of them. It was the Son of God who cleansed the leper. Let the nations of the world trust in him to heal them.

Jesus told the leper not to tell anybody about it (other than the priest). "But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city; but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter." The healed man was so happy that he could not keep quiet about the matter.

JESUS CURES A PALSIED MAN AND FORGIVES HIS SINS

Matthew 9:2-8; *Mark* 2:1-12; *Luke* 5:17-26

It was in the fall of the year when Jesus taught in desert places. When the weather became cold, he and his disciples returned to Capernaum.

When it became known that he had returned, a large crowd came to the house where he was staying, and among these were Pharisees and doctors of the law from all parts of Palestine. It appears that the leaders had been aroused by his cure of the leper, and they sent men to spy on him, and to try to undo his influence with the people.

So, we believe that Jesus was surrounded by a critical audience, and the Scribes and Pharisees sat nearest to him; for all the people made room for them, who were the spiritual advisers of the people. As Jesus preached, he must have been admired by all; and the crowd must have listened spellbound.

Then a strange thing attracted their attention, and also caused Jesus to stop preaching. Some men brought one of their neighbors, who had the palsy, to be healed. They were sure that if Jesus saw the man, he would pity him; but the crowd would not make room for them, and they could not bring him to Jesus. At last, they found that they could make an opening above Jesus through which to let down the couch on which the palsied man lay. In your mind, you can see the crowd looking at the opening, and those nearest would help lift the couch to the floor, right in front of Jesus. Perhaps, the palsied man felt sinful, and was afraid that Jesus would not cure him. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the sick of the palsy, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." The Scribes said to themselves, "who is this that speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone?" They did not know that Jesus was the Son of God, and had power to forgive sins. They thought that he was speaking as if he had the power of God, and was only a man. That would be blasphemy. Jesus asked which was easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," or to say, "Rise up and walk"? And to show them that he had power to forgive sins, he said to the palsied man, "Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." The man got up, and rolled up his couch, and carried it home, glorifying God. He was very happy, and told everybody about it. And they were all amazed, and glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, "We have seen strange things today."

What did these Scribes and Pharisees say then? How could they give an evil report on what they had seen?

CHAPTER IV.

MATTHEW CALLED

Matthew 9:9-17; *Mark* 2:14-22; *Luke* 5:27-39

Probably, nothing that Jesus ever did gave more offense to the Pharisees than the calling of a tax-collector, a publican, to be one of his disciples. The most despised of the tax-collectors were those who collected customs dues. Matthew collected the dues at the seaside town of Capernaum.

He, of course, had heard Jesus preach at different times, and personally knew of the many cures he had wrought. What Jesus did and said must have made a deep impression on Matthew; but what hope was there for him, who was reckoned among the vilest of sinners?

Matthew knew the shipowners of Capernaum, and probably, had met the four disciples whose parents had fishing-vessels on the lake. He also saw the ships coming to port loaded with people, who were coming to listen to the great preacher, and to see him perform wonderful cures. Matthew honored Jesus, but he did not think that Jesus was interested in him.

As Jesus was going on his way, he passed the custom-house, and seeing Matthew, he said to him, "Follow me." Matthew left all and followed him. He felt much honored in that Jesus asked him to follow him. "Levi (Matthew) made him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and others present that sat down with them." The Scribes and Pharisees would not eat with publicans; so we know that none of them were present. In passing by, they said to the disciples, "Why do ye eat with publicans and sinners?" Jesus replied, "They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Jesus must have gained the good will of all the publicans that day. As the Scribes and Pharisees began to turn against him, the Gentiles were drawn to him.

Then the Scribes and Pharisees asked why the disciples of John the Baptist and also the disciples of the Pharisees fast often and pray, whereas thine eat and drink. Jesus replied that the time would come when his disciples would fast, when he is taken away from them: but so long as he is with them, they are jolly; just as people are at a wedding so long as the bridegroom is with them.

Then Jesus spoke a parable about putting new wine into old bottles. He said the new wine will burst the old bottles.* These Scribes and Pharisees had been taught to live in a different way, and they did not understand the doctrine of salvation for all. They could not hold it. They were like the old bottles which could not hold the new wine.

Let us take hold on new ideas that make for the betterment of mankind.

THE TWELVE APOSTLES

Matthew 10:2-4; *Mark* 3:13-19; *Luke* 6:12-16

A disciple is a person who learns from another person who is a teacher. Some of the disciples of John the Baptist became disciples of Jesus.

The Apostles were the twelve disciples whom Jesus chose to be with him all the time. They were his direct representatives. They were sent forth to preach and to heal people of mental and physical ailments. They would catch the spirit of the Master by hearing all the words he spoke.

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*Wine skins.

Jesus had many disciples, and he spent a night in prayer before he chose the twelve to be his apostles. "And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named *apostles*." Among these twelve, we find the disciples who came to him the first two days after he returned to the Jordan, after his temptation in the wilderness.

These are the names of the twelve Apostles:

(1) Simon Peter, son of Jonas;
(2) Andrew, the brother of Peter;
(3) James, the son of Zebedee;
(4) John, the brother of James;
(5) Philip;
(6) Nathaniel, or Bartholomew, son of Tolmai;
(7) Matthew, or Levi, son of Alphaeus;
(8) James, the son of Alphaeus, or Clopas;
(9) Lebbaeus Thaddeus, Judas, or Jude, brother of James;
(10) Thomas, Didymus;
(11) Simon, the Canaanite (Simon Zelotes);
(12) Judas Iscariot, of Kerioth, a town in Judea.

Of these disciples, Peter and Andrew, James and John were fishermen. Andrew, Peter and Philip all lived in Bethsaida, a town near Capernaum. Nathaniel lived at Cana, about four miles from Nazareth. Matthew was the collector of customs at the port of Capernaum. Simon Zelotes belonged to the party of the Zealots, who were Galileans of the strictest order. Judas Iscariot was the only one from outside of Galilee. Clopas, according to ancient authority, was the brother of Joseph: and Zebedee was married to Salome, the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus. So, John, who took care of Mary after Jesus was crucified, was her nephew.

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

(a) BEATITUDES

Matthew 5:1-12

When Jesus saw a great crowd coming to hear him preach he went to the top of a hill and seated himself. Perhaps, he seated himself on a stone, and his disciples clustered close about him, while the other people seated themselves on the slope of the hill, or mount.

Jesus did no miracle, but he told the people what kind of people pleased God most, and he spoke of the rules that should govern our living. He did not lay down commandments; he spoke of a new life. The children of the heavenly kingdom would be like God. Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father in Heaven is perfect."

We are glad that Matthew was there to take down notes on what Jesus said. The Gospel, according to St. Matthew, contains more of the Sermon on the Mount than either of the gospels according to Mark and Luke. We shall first speak of the Beatitudes, or blessings.

The Beatitudes:

(1) "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." God loves people who are humble, not proud.

(2) "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Jesus has a tender heart for all who are in sorrow, and he will comfort such.

(3) "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." People who are meek do not boast; they are gentle and peaceable. Moses was a meek man.

(4) "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." People who want to become good shall be filled with goodness.

(5) "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Jesus taught that if we are merciful and forgiving, then also will our sins be forgiven.

(6) "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." The pure in heart are those who think no evil.

(7) "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Those who do not quarrel, and who help to make peace in the world, are called the children of God. God loves peace. Warlike people bring much sorrow upon themselves and upon others. The kingdom of God is gaining ground and wars will soon cease forever. War is not a proper method of settling a dispute.

(8) "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." People who will stand for the right, even though it costs them friends and brings them persecution, will receive heaven as a reward. Jesus died in order that right might triumph in the world; and thousands of martyrs have died for their faith.

(9) "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." In the early church, thousands were persecuted and falsely accused. "Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Is it not true that many Christians are lukewarm today because there is little persecution that affects them?

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ON THE MOUNT

(Continued)

Matthew 5:13 *to* 7:27; *Luke* 6:24-49

We have already made mention of the Beatitudes which Jesus spoke to his disciples in his sermon on the mount, and now we shall mention other important things which he taught his disciples. Jesus, probably, did not speak of all these things in one meeting.

(1) Jesus told his disciples that they were the *salt* of the earth. Salt is put on food to make it taste better. In the same way, the world will be better because the followers of Jesus are in it.

(2) Jesus said, "Ye are the *light* of the world." A light is to show the way. True Christians show others how to live. Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

(3) Jesus said he did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill. Those who have the Holy Spirit within themselves will obey the law without thinking about it. Righteous people do not have their thoughts centered on the police. The main thing is to have the right spirit within, and then the law will take care of itself. Laws are of little value, if the spirit to obey them is not present.

(4) The law of Moses said, "Thou shalt not kill." Jesus said that people should not be angry with each other, and be ready to forgive. Love your neighbor.

(5) Jesus spoke against *divorce.* According to the law of Moses, it was easy for a man who did not like his wife to get rid of her; but Jesus taught people to forgive and not lightly break the marriage contract.

(6) Jesus told people *not to swear.* They were not even to use unnecessary language. It seems strange to require a man who is in the habit of telling the truth to take an oath when witnessing before a magistrate. Liars lie anyway regardless of the oath. One need not take an oath: he can affirm.

(7) "Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth'."* Jesus said, "Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." Some deaf boys remarked, "That is very hard to do." They were led to see that the opposite course would lead to a fight. The one who turns the other cheek is the victor from the start; and the one who struck the blow will feel very mean, and will have no friend to stand by him. The deaf boys decided that the law of Jesus is perfect, but it seems so hard to put in practice. One does not take time to think it all out.

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*Laws of Hammurabi written about 2200 B. C.

(8) It hath been said, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy." Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you." Anybody can like those who are friendly toward him. Sinners can do that, but it takes a Christian to wish well to his enemy.

(9) Jesus said, "Do not your alms before men to be seen of them." If you help the poor do not make a show of it.

(10) When you pray do not make a show of it, as the Pharisees used to do. Go to your room and pray quietly. You need not use much language; God already knows what you need.

(11) "Lay not up for yourselves *treasures on earth.*" Jesus taught people to be unselfish. We are not to think of getting all the time. "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

(12) Jesus said that it was not right to be over anxious about the future. The birds do not worry; yet they have enough. The lilies of the field are very beautiful, and they do not worry about their looks. God makes them beautiful, and he will take care of you.

(13) "Judge not, that ye be not judged." Do not be in haste to find fault with people. If you cannot say anything good about them, you had better keep quiet. Probably, you have many faults yourself.

(14) Ask God for things that you need, and he will give them to you. You may want things that you do not need, and in that case, God will do what is best for you.

(15) Jesus then laid down this general rule: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do you even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."

The Master Builder of Nazareth closed his discourse by saying: "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man, which built his house on a rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, who built his house on the sand; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

"Lead on, O King Eternal,
Till sin's fierce war shall cease,
And holiness shall whisper
The sweet amen of peace:
For not with swords loud clashing,
Nor roll of stirring drums;
With deeds of love and mercy,
The heavenly kingdom comes."

Ernest W. Shertleff.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Matthew 6:5-15

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus spoke about many different things; and one of these was prayer. He said when we pray we are not to make a show of ourselves, as the hypocrites do: for they like to pray where people see them. We are to go to our rooms, where all is quiet, and talk to God alone. We are not to say the same thing over and over again, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Our Father in heaven knows what we need before we ask him. Jesus said that we should pray like this:

"Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forver. Amen."

In this prayer Jesus calls God *our Father;* for God loves us, and is interested in us, just as a father loves his children. *Hallowed* means sacred. God's name should not be used in vain. It is holy. *Thy kingdom come* means that we want the people to obey God on earth as angels do in heaven. We want evil overthrown in the world. We ask God daily for *bread,* because we need bread to eat, and we need also spiritual help. The soul is even more important than the body. We need two kinds of bread. *Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,* means that we are asking God to forgive us our sins, as we forgive others, who sin against us. God loves people who are humble and forgiving. If we are not willing to forgive others, there is no use of making this prayer. God wants us to hate sin, nothing else.

We ask God to *lead us* and to *deliver us from evil.* We are apt to go astray, if we depend on ourselves alone. God knows what is best for us, and we should ask him to lead us.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. God is our king. We want him to have full power in our lives, so that we may glorify his name always. *Amen* means let it be so.

"Prayer is the soul's sincere desire,
    Uttered or unexpressed;
The motion of a hidden fire
    That trembles in the breast."

"Prayer is the burden of a sigh,
    The falling of a tear;
The upward glancing of an eye
    When none but God is near."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

HEALING OF THE CENTURION'S SERVANT

Matthew 8:5-13; *Luke* 7:1-10

A centurian was the captain over a hundred soldiers in the Roman army. This centurion was located at Capernaum, where the Romans had a garrison. To show his good will toward the Jewish nation, he gave the money to build the synagogue in Capernaum, in which Jesus had preached. From the ruins, it appears that it was one of the best buildings used for that purpose. The centurion was a Gentile.

His servant, who was dear to him, was very sick, and the centurion had faith that Jesus could cure him; and he sent some Jewish elders to him to ask him to come and heal the servant. The elders told Jesus that the centurion was worthy; for he had built the synagogue for them.

Jesus went with the elders; but before they came to the house, the centurion sent friends to Jesus to tell him not to bother about coming to the house. He said that he was not fit to have Jesus come under his roof, and if Jesus would just say so, his servant would be healed. The centurion said that he gives orders, and men obey him, and in the same way, Jesus need but say so and his servant would be healed. Jesus turned about, and went back, saying to those who followed him, "I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." And Jesus said more than that: he said that many shall come from the East and the West, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven; but the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness.

It was always represented by the Israelites that they were the chosen people of God, and they would get to heaven; but the gentiles would be placed in outer darkness where there would be "weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Jesus made it plain that people of all nations who were not Israelites, would be found in heaven, and Israelites who had no faith would not be found there. In other words, heaven is the reward of the faithful of all nations. There is no chosen nation, no chosen people; but "whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." That is the gospel of equal opportunity.

Those who were sent from the house returned and found the servant well.

RAISING OF THE WIDOW'S SON AT NAIN

Luke 7:11-18

When Jesus cured the leper and sent him to show himself to the priest, the rulers were aroused to action, and sent spies to keep tab on his work. He now did a miracle which surpassed all previous miracles. He raised the dead, and thereby showed that he had power over death.

A poor widow at Nain, a village about twenty-five miles from Capernaum, had only one son to lean upon for support; and he became sick, and died. The funeral procession was on its way to the cemetery. The bier was carried alternately by those who wanted to show their sympathy to the widow in this time of her great sorrow. She followed next to the bier, and other mourners followed her, making a large procession. Jesus and his disciples met this funeral train. Jesus, the prince of life, met death and sorrow, and vanquished both.

"When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said unto her, 'Weep not.' And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, 'Young man, I say unto thee arise'; and he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother." Her sorrow was turned to joy; but they felt that

God was present, and fear fell upon all. They said, "A great prophet is risen up among us."

The fame of this act spread all over the country, and, of course, the leaders at Jerusalem found out about it, and they would be more jealous of his power than ever. Some of John's disciples carried the news to him. John was still in prison.

JESUS, THE FRIEND OF SINNERS DINES IN A PHARISEE'S HOUSE

Luke 7:36-50

The Pharisees thought ill of Jesus because he was the friend of publicans and sinners. Whenever sinners invited him to their homes, he would accept the invitation, and he would put in a good word for the kingdom, and try to win them to a better life. The Pharisees thought they would defile themselves by going to the homes of sinners; and, of course, never won them to a better life.

A strange thing happened in that a Pharisee named Simon invited Jesus to dine with him. It was not because Simon wanted to honor Jesus. He was ready to insult him. He offered him no water to bathe his feet, as the custom was, and he gave him no scented oil for his head. He had also invited other Pharisees to the feast, who were ready to find fault with Jesus.

We can be sure that the people who were not Pharisees, and who were friends of Jesus, would be anxious to know how Simon would behave toward Jesus. The houses were not closed as our homes are, and people could see what was going on. They could see the people about the table, as they reclined on couches, leaning on the left elbow, and eating with the right hand. People would come and go, and talk to the guests while they were eating.

There was a sinful woman in that town who had heard that Jesus forgave sins to people who wanted to lead a better life. She must have heard him speak kind and loving words to sinners, words of hope; and she was waiting for a chance to tell him that she wanted to lead a better life. When she found out that Jesus was at Simon's house, and that Simon had given Jesus no water to wash his feet, she felt sorry for Jesus; and she took the most precious thing that she had, an alabaster box of ointment, and went to Simon's house, and stood behind Jesus. She, probably, intended to put the ointment on Jesus' head, and tell him how grateful she was for the hope that he held out to those who had been sinful and wanted to lead a better life; but she was so overcome with emotion that she sank down at his feet weeping. Some of the tears fell on Jesus' feet, and she wiped them off with her hair. Then she kissed his feet, and poured the costly ointment on them.

What was Simon thinking about? He felt that his home had been disgraced in that such a thing had taken place in his house. He and his friends at the table decided in their minds that Jesus was no prophet; for he did not know that the woman who was touching him was a sinner.

Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to Simon, that he wanted to ask him a question. Simon said, "Master, say on." Jesus said there was a man to whom two men owed money. One owed him five hundred pence, and the other owed him fifty. Neither of them had money, and they could not pay what they owed. The man forgave each of them the debt due him. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Which of them will love him most?" Simon replied that he supposed the one to whom he forgave most. Jesus told Simon that he had answered correctly. Then he said to Simon, "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house; thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore, I say unto thee, 'Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little'." And Jesus said unto her, "Thy sins are forgiven."

Then the Pharisees at the table said within themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" Jesus said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." How happy she must have been with all her sins forgiven! These Pharisees would never have won this woman to a better life. It is the gospel of love and sympathy and salvation through Jesus Christ that wins people to the better life. "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

JESUS MADE THE BLIND SEE AND THE DEAF TO HEAR

Matthew 9:27-34; *Mark* 3:22-30

Two blind men followed Jesus, crying and saying, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on us." Jesus asked if they believed that he could make them see; and they said they beliveth. Then he touched their eyes, and said, "According to your faith be it unto you." And their eyes were opened. Jesus told them not to tell anyone about it; but they were so happy that they could not keep quiet, and spread his fame in all that part of the country. Jesus cured other blind people at different times.

They also brought to Jesus a man who was dumb, who could not speak. He seemed to have some mental trouble too. Probably, he was deaf; because people who are dumb are generally deaf. Jesus cured the man of all his ailments, and he spoke plainly. The people were astonished, and said, "It was never so seen in Israel."

But the Scribes who came down from Jerusalem, said, "He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils." In other words, they said that the devil helps Jesus do miracles. (The devil is the evil spirit which hates the right.) They had more faith in the power of the evil one than in the power of God. Perhaps, evil had more power in their lives.

These men were very wicked in saying that the devil helps Jesus. Jesus was very patient with them, and called them together, and asked them if the devil would fight against himself. Jesus was fighting against evil, and the evil spirit would not help to fight against evil. Would you fight against your friends?

Jesus told these scribes that they were blaspheming against the Holy Ghost, which was the greatest of sins; and they were in danger of hell, where they would be sorry forever. It was a dreadful sin for these Scribes and Pharisees to say that the evil spirit was helping Jesus; yet this is what they were going to tell the people from this time on. They could not deny the miracles, and they did not want to confess that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God; so their excuse was that the devil helps Jesus. They said to the people, "He hath a devil: why listen ye to him?"

(1) JESUS, LORD OF THE SABBATH
(2) JESUS, HEALS ON SABBATH DAYS

Matthew 12:10-15; *Mark* 3:1-6; *Luke* 6:6-11

The Jews were strict about keeping sabbath days. There were thirty-nine rules relating to work on the sabbath days, and people were punished if they disobeyed. The third of these rules forbade threshing on the sabbath.

One sabbath, Jesus and his disciples walked on a path through a wheat field when the wheat was ripe. They were hungry, and pulled off a few heads of wheat and rubbed them in their hands to separate the wheat from the chaff, and then they ate the wheat.

The Pharisees, who were watching them, told Jesus and his disciples it was not lawful to do that on the sabbath. Jesus reminded them that David and his men ate the sacred bread in the house of God on the sabbath; and that the priests slay lambs and offer them up on that day and are blameless. "Therefore, I say unto you that in this place is one greater than the temple. . . . For the Son of man is Lord, even of the sabbath day."

On another sabbath, Jesus and his disciples went to a synagogue, the Pharisees watching them all the while. They had brought a man with a withered hand to the synagogue to see if Jesus would heal him on the sabbath day, in order that they might accuse him if he did.

And he said unto them, "What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much better then is a man than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days." Then said he to the man, "Stretch forth thy hand"; and it was restored whole like the other.

The Pharisees became very angry, and talked to one another about what they might do to Jesus. Think of it! They were not glad that the hand was healed. They had no love for the poor man, and even hated Jesus because he healed the hand on the sabbath day! Jesus taught that we should love our neighbor. That is more important than rules about the sabbath day. Our Christian Sabbath is not supposed to be a day of rest only; it is also a day for doing good; a day for spiritual improvement; but not a day for worldly gain.

Then the Pharisees took counsel with the Herodians how they might destroy him. Jesus heard about it and withdrew from that section, followed by great crowds.

THE BRETHREN SEEK TO HINDER JESUS

There always will be difference of opinion as to how the "brethren" were related to Jesus.. There is good reason for beliving that they were children born to Joseph and Mary after the birth of Jesus. The names of the boys, as recorded in Mark 6:3, are James, Joses, Judas and Simeon, and there were at least two sisters in the family. These may have been children to a former wife, or they may have been cousins. Tradition avers that Jesus was the only son of Mary.

Everything points to Joseph as being a very wise father, who brought up his children in the ways of righteousness. He died before Jesus entered upon his ministry. If he had lived to see Jesus oppose the Pharisees, he too might have joined the brethren in trying to stop Jesus from preaching and taking issue with the spiritual fathers. The brethren were sincere, but they did not know all, and could not understand the new gospel preached by Jesus. They had been taught to obey the law and observe the ceremonies, and could not break away from the teachings of the Scribes and the Pharisees. Many sincere people have stood in the way of progress, because they could not get out of their old rut of thinking.

The opposition of the brethren appears in the following narrative:

"While he yet talked with the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. Then one said unto him, 'Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.' But he answered and said unto him that told him, 'Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?' And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father in Heaven the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.* My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God, and do it'."†

The brethren were unfriendly to his ministry, and sought to interfere in his work. They had come "to lay hold on him; for they said, 'He is beside himself'."¶

In all probability, the Pharisees and the Scribes were stirring up trouble by telling the brethren that Jesus' mind was giving way, expecting them in turn to influence Mary. No doubt, great pressure was brought to bear on Mary to use her influence to have Jesus withdraw from his ministry.

The Pharisaic opposition to Jesus was due to a number of reasons. First, Jesus was not ordained by the Sanhedrin to preach. Secondly, he defiled himself in their estimation by eating with publicans and sinners. Thirdly, he forgave sins outright to those who were heartily sorry, without demanding any penance. Fourthly, he did not obey ceremonial laws. He ignored all rites. Fifthly, he healed on the sabbath day. Jesus did not try to irritate the Pharisees and the priests, but the new religion he

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*Matthew 12:46-50.
†Luke 8:21.
¶Mark 3:21.

preached was directly opposed to their way of thinking, and that produced their opposition.

Mary, in her great anxiety for the safety of Jesus, having been informed by the brethren of threats made by those opposed to him, and fearing a physical and mental breakdown on account of the great crowds pressing about him for help, went with the brethren, at their earnest request, to prevail on Jesus to leave his work. Mary had not lost faith in Jesus.

On the Cross, Jesus assigned Mary to the care of his best beloved disciple, and not to the brethren. We know that James, one of the brethren, did not believe until Jesus appeared unto him after the crucifixion. Later, James became the head of the church in Jerusalem.

CHAPTER V.

Whenever Jesus wished to teach great truths, he told stories to make plain to the people what he was trying to teach. These stories are called parables. Those speakers are most entertaining who illustrate with apt stories what they want the people to understand. It is a good way to teach. Jesus was a great teacher.

One day when Jesus was teaching by the sea of Galilee a great crowd was pressing about him, and he took a seat in a fishing boat, and from it spoke to the people on the shore. He told them seven stories, the first of which is

(1) THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER.

Matthew 13:1-23; *Mark* 4:1-23; *Luke* 8:4-15

A man went out to sow seed in a field. Some fell by the wayside where the ground was not plowed and the birds came and ate the seed. Some fell on stony ground, where the soil was not deep, and when the sun became very hot the plants died. Some fell among thorns, and the thorn grew up and choked the plants. Some fell on good ground and the ground brought forth a big crop.

The disciples asked Jesus to explain this parable to them He said that the seed is the word of God which is preached to people. When people hear the word and forget all abou it, that is like the seed that fell by the wayside. When people hear the word gladly, and do what is right for a while, and then stop following the right when there i trouble for those who believe; that is like seed that fell on stony ground. When people hear the word, and are so busy with the cares of this life that they have no time to rk for God, that is like the seed that fell among thorns. ıen people hear the word, and go to work for God and much good, that is like seed that fell on good ground.

(2) THE PARABLE OF THE TARES.

Matthew 13:24-30

esus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man ich sowed good seed in his field; and while he slept, enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat." Tares weeds. When the servants saw the weeds, they asked master if they were to pull out the weeds. He told m to let both the weeds and the wheat grow till the vest time. Then the weeds will be separated from the eat, and will be burned. The wheat will he put in the n.

he disciples asked Jesus to explain what this parable ant. Jesus said, "He that sowed the good seed is the ı of Man; the field is the world. The good seed are the ldren of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; harvest is the end of the world; the reapers are the els. The wicked shall be destroyed at the end of the rld, just as the tares were; but the good shall be happy ıeaven."

(3) THE PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED.

Matthew 13:31-32

esus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of stard seed." This seed is very small, and yet it grows a large bush. In the same way, Jesus, at first, taught y a few disciples, and now there are millions of Chrisıs in the world. A great advance has been made from a y small beginning.

(4) THE PARABLE OF THE LEAVEN.

Matthew 13:33

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven." Leaven is yeast that is put into dough to make it rise before it is put into the oven to bake. The leaven goes into all parts of the dough. In the same way, the words of Jesus have gone into all parts of the world, and have led people to a higher level of thinking and acting.

(5) PARABLE OF THE TREASURE.

Matthew 13:44

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field", which, when a man finds it, he hides, and goes and sells all his things to get money to buy that field. The man gives up all his other things to get that one treasure. There are those who have given up many worldly things for the one Great Treasure, Jesus the Christ.

(6) PARABLE OF THE PEARL.

Matthew 13:45-46

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant seeking goodly pearls; who, when he found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it." Jesus is the Pearl of Great Price. There are many who have forsaken all else to follow him.

(7) THE PARABLE OF THE NET.

Matthew 13:47-50

Jesus said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered up all sorts of sea animals." When the net was drawn to shore, the good fish were kept, but all the others were thrown away. In the same way it will be at the judgment day, the good people will be separated from the bad.

THE WINDS AND THE WAVES OBEY JESUS.

Matthew 8:23-27; *Mark* 4:35-41; *Luke* 8:22-25

After Jesus had spoken the parables to the great multi-ude on the shore, he was very tired and since there was no est on shore for him, he said to his disciples, "Let us go ver to the other side" of the sea. Jesus lay down in the tern of the ship to rest, and as they sailed along he fell sleep. A great storm arose, and as the ship was filling vith water, and they were in danger of sinking, they awoke im, saying, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" 'And he rose and rebuked the wind, and said, 'Peace, be till'. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm." Then Jesus said to them, "Why are you so afraid? How is t that you have no faith?" They said one to another, 'What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the vaves obey him?"

"O strengthen me, that while I stand
Firm on the rock, and strong in thee,
I may stretch out a loving hand
To wrestlers with the troubled sea."

FRANCES R. HAVERGAL.

HEALING THE DEMONIZED

Matthew 8:28-34; *Mark* 5:1-20; *Luke* 8:26-40

When Jesus and his disciples came to the other side of he sea, to the country of the Gadarenes, they were met by a big strong wild crazy man, who, the people of that day hought, was controlled by demons. He lived in holes in he rocks, that had been made for tombs. He wore no clothes, and cut himself with stones, and made loud noises. People were afraid of him, and nobody passed along that way.

When he saw Jesus coming a long way off, he ran to him, and fell down before him, saying in a loud voice, "What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God Most High? I beseech thee, torment me not." Jesus said, "What is thy name?" And he said, "Legion"; which means a great number; "for there were many evil spirits in the man." They asked that they might enter into a herd of swine, which were on a steep hill near the shore. Jesus allowed them to do so, and then the herd ran down the steep hill into the sea and were drowned. Pigs are easily frightened, and they may have been thrown into a panic by the shrieks of the crazy man, and rushed over a declivity into the sea.

When those who had charge of the swine saw what happened, they hastened to the town nearby, and told the people. Of course, everyone came out to see what had been done. They saw the man sitting at the feet of Jesus. He was calm and in his right mind, and his face must have shone with joy. The people became afraid and asked Jesus to leave. They felt too sinful to have Jesus near them. The man who was healed wanted to go with Jesus; but Jesus told him to stay in his own country, and tell the people what great things God had done for him. Then Jesus and his disciples went back to Capernaum, where the people were waiting for them.

The people who lost their pigs must have been much dissatisfied; but the man was worth more than the pigs. The wealth of a nation does not consist of the property in it, but of the people.

(a) Healing a Woman with a Bloody Issue

(b) Raising to Life of Jairus' Daughter

Matthew 9:18-26; *Luke* 8:41-56; *Mark* 5:22-43

The ruler of the synagogue at Capernaum had a daughter twelve years of age. She was his only child; and became sick, and was about to die. Her father, Jairus, believing that Jesus could heal her, hastened to him, and knelt down at his feet, and begged him to come to his house, and heal his daughter, who was dying.

On the way, the people crowded around Jesus and the disciples who went with him. There was a woman in that crowd, who had a bloody issue (a running sore that would not heal). For twelve years she had paid lots of money to doctors, who were not able to heal her. She thought that if she could only touch the hem of Jesus' garment, she would be healed; and she forced her way near enough to touch his clothes, and was healed immediately. Jesus knew everything the woman had thought and done, and he said, "Who touched me?" The woman was afraid to answer, and the rest said that they did not touch him. Peter reminded Jesus that there were so many crowding about him that they could not help but touch him.

Jesus said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that power hath gone out of me." He wanted the woman to tell what had happened; and when she knew that Jesus knew all that had happened, she came trembling, and fell down before him, and told Jesus and all the people how she had been healed immediately. Jesus said to her, "Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."

While Jesus was still speaking to the woman, a person came from Jairus' house, and said to Jairus, who was with Jesus, "Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master." But when Jesus heard that, he answered, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." When Jesus came to the house, he allowed only Peter, James and John and the parents to go into the room with him. He said to the mourners, "Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth."

They laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. Jesus took the dead girl by the hand, saying, "Maid, arise." And her spirit came again, and she arose, and Jesus told her parents to give her food. The parents were astonished to see their daughter well again.

> "He speaks, and, listening to his voice,
> New life the dead receive;
> The mournful, broken hearts rejoice;
> The humble poor believe."

THE SECOND VISIT OF JESUS TO NAZARETH

Matthew 13:54-58; *Mark* 6:1-6

Months have gone by since Jesus preached his first sermon in his home town. Since then, he has cured the deaf, the blind, the leper, the demonized, and has raised the dead. His fame had gone beyond the borders of Palestine, and now he has returned to visit his home town for the last time.

"He came into his own country; and his disciples followed him. And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue; and many hearing him were astonished, saying, 'From whence hath this man these things? And what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us?' And they were offended at him."

But Jesus said unto them, "A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." He could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them. He marvelled at their unbelief. They were all so steeped in their old ways of thinking, that it seemed impossible for them to grasp the spirit of the new teaching.

DEATH OF JOHN THE BAPTIST

Matthew 11:2-14 *and* 14:1-12; *Mark* 6:14-29; *Luke* 9:7-9

After John baptized Jesus, his work as a forerunner was finished, though he still kept on preaching that people should repent. He was a fearless preacher, who was not afraid to tell Herod Antipas, the son of the Herod that killed the babies at Bethlehem, and who now ruled the country for Rome, that it was not right for him to have his brother's wife while the brother was still living. The name of this woman was Herodias; and she was very angry at John for what he said, and got Herod to put John in jail. She would have had John killed, but they feared the people, who knew John to be a prophet.

John had lived out of doors all his life, and he was much depressed by his dungeon life. Through his disciples he had learned of the wonderful power of Jesus; but he must have thought of Jesus, also, as one who would have temporal power, and he was wondering when he would use it. He sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask him if he was the one that was to come, or whether they should look for another. John did not fully understand the work that Jesus had come to do. Perhaps, he thought with the rest of the Jews that the Christ would throw off the Roman yoke, and set him free from prison.

While the two disciples of John were with Jesus, he healed many. They saw the kind of work that Jesus did, and he sent them back to tell John, "how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and to the poor the gospel is preached. And blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." But he said nothing about restoring the kingdom to Israel. His kingdom is in the hearts of men; *it has nothing to do* *with a zionist movement; it is not much concerned with the temporal power of the church.*

The death of John came about in this way, not so long after he sent the two messengers to Jesus:

When the time came for Herod's birthday, there was a great supper to which his lords and captains were invited. They drank lots of wine, and caroused; and Salome, the daughter of Herodias, came into the room and danced before Herod and his company. She danced very well, and was asked to dance again and again. Herod was so well pleased that he said he would give her anything she asked for, even to half his kingdom. She went to her mother, and said, "What shall I ask?" And she said, "The head of John the Baptist." When the daughter told Herod, he was very sorry. But he did not want to break his promise before all that company; and with the wit of a drunken man, he ordered his executioner to bring in the head of John in a charger (A large dish), and he gave it to the daughter, who carried it to the mother. When the disciples heard it, they took his corpse and laid it in the tomb.

Jesus said of John, "Among them that are born of women, there hath none risen greater than John the Baptist." . . . "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? . . . For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He hath a devil'. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.' "

John was put in jail because he stood for the right; Jesus died on the cross to save people: the apostles and thousands of the followers of Jesus died for their faith. The world is better for these great sacrifices, and all these martyrs have passed on to glory. Men may kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul.

"Be strong!
We are not here to play, to dream, to drift,
We have hard work to do and loads to lift.
Shun not the struggle, face it, 'tis God's gift.
Be strong, be strong!"

"Be strong!
Say not the days are evil—Who's to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!
Stand up, speak out, and bravely, in God's name.
Be strong, be strong!"

MALTBIE D. BABCOCK.

JESUS SENDS FORTH THE TWELVE, AND, LATER, SEVENTY DISCIPLES TO PREACH AND TO HEAL

Jesus called the twelve apostles to himself, and gave them power to heal all kinds of diseases. He told them to go to the Israelites, and not to the Samaritans and the Gentiles. In this campaign, they were to concentrate their efforts on winning the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

They were to preach, saying, "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand." They were to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out evil spirits. They were to take along no money, no bag, no extra shoes or extra clothes. When they would come to a village or town, they were to find a house where they could stay, and they were to remain at that house as long as they were working in that place. They were sent out by twos; so there were no more than two apostles staying at one house.

Jesus said if people would not receive them into their homes, it would not be well for those people. The cities of Sodom and Gomorrha would stand a better chance at the day of judgment than the towns that would not receive the apostles. All of these people knew of Jesus healing the sick and doing miracles, and if they would not allow the apostles to come into their houses, they deserved severe punishment. Those who reject the servants of God in these days are likewise blameworthy. The church of God is doing a great work. The spiritual forces in a nation should receive first consideration. How many contribute nothing toward the spread of the heavenly kingdom!

The apostles cast out many evil spirits, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. They did all this in Jesus' name. He had given them the power.*

When king Herod Antipas heard of the great miracles that were wrought, he said that John the Baptist had risen from the dead, and that it was he that was doing the great miracles. Herod trembled when he thought of John, the great prophet he beheaded. He was never happy after he killed John, and died in exile after his kingdom was taken from him. He was a low-minded man who could not understand spiritual values. He wanted Jesus to do a miracle for him; but he was not interested in the gospel that Jesus preached.†

When the apostles returned to Jesus, they told him all that they had done, and he invited them to a quiet place for a while to rest.

Some time later, Jesus sent out seventy more of his disciples. He said, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." Jesus meant that there was much work to do, and more people were needed to help.

Jesus sent out the seventy by twos, and gave them the same instructions he had given the twelve. The seventy returned with joy to Jesus, saying that the evil spirits obeyed them in his name. Jesus told them to rejoice that their names were written in heaven.*

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*Matthew 10:1-15; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6.

†Mark 6:14-16; Luke 9:7-9; Luke 23:8.

Today, many persons are needed to carry the gospel message into all parts of the world. The work is very great, and more workers are needed, and money to support the workers in home and foreign fields. Who will help in the harvest field?

"Must I be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize,
And sailed through bloody seas?"

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*Luke 10:1-20

CHAPTER VI.

JESUS FEEDS FIVE THOUSAND MEN

Matthew 14:13-21; *Mark* 6:30-44; *Luke* 9:10-17; *John* 6:1-15

When it became known that John had been beheaded by Herod, the people of Galilee, which were in Herod's dominion, became aroused, and looking to Jesus as their leader, more than ever before, flocked to him. Since Jesus was not seeking to establish an earthly kingdom, he would avoid the crowds of enthusiastic Galileans by withdrawing from Herod's kingdom. It was not safe for him to remain there longer; for Herod might arrest him on the pretext that he was stirring up the people.

After the apostles returned from preaching and from healing the people, Jesus knew that they needed a rest, and that they could not get it in Capernaum; for people were coming and going all the time, so that there was scarcely time to eat. They therefore took leave in a small vessel, and went to the east side of the sea of Galilee, near where the Jordan enters it. This was in the territory governed by Philip, where they were not in danger of arrest by Herod.

The people saw the direction in which they were going, and hurried around the north end of the sea on foot; and some got to the place before the boat arrived. Others came later, and before long there were thousands. When Jesus saw the multitude, he pitied them; because they were like sheep without a shepherd, and he began to teach them many things.

When it was getting late in the day, the disciples said to

Jesus, "This is a desert place. . . . Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat." Jesus told his disciples to give the people food. They asked if they were to go and buy bread, and give them to eat. He asked how many loaves they had. Andrew said, "There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two fishes: but what are they among so many?"

Jesus said, "Make the men sit down." It was a waste place, but there was lots of grass; and the people sat down in companies of fifty, to the number of five thousand men, besides women and children. In going to Jerusalem to attend the Passover which was at hand, people would cross the Jordan at the ford several miles above the entrance into the sea, and would go down on the east side. These people added to those who came from Capernaum and other Galilean towns made up the great crowd.

"And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties. And when he had taken the five loves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to the disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments." The people said, "This is of a truth that prophet that should come into the world." They answered the question asked by John the Baptist: "Art thou he or look we for another?" They wanted to take him by force to make him king: but he went away by himself into a mountain to pray.

Everyone thought of the Messiah who was to come as a great king of the Jews, who would throw off the Roman rule, and make Jerusalem the capital of the world.

PETER'S FAITH FAILS

Matthew 14:22-33; *Mark* 6:45-52; *John* 6:15-21

When Jesus perceived that the people wanted to make him king, he sent his disciples toward Capernaum in the boat, while he dismissed the multitude with a blessing. Then he went up into the mountain to be alone with his Father in prayer. The disciples thought Jesus would come later by land.

It was not so far to Capernaum, but toward morning the disciples had not yet reached land. They were in the midst of the sea, tossed by contrary winds. Jesus saw their difficulty, and came to them, walking on the water. When the "disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, 'It is a spirit!' and they cried out with fear." Jesus calmed their fears by saying, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

Then Peter gathered up spunk, and said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come to thee on the water." Jesus said, "Come." Peter started, but when he saw the boisterous rolling waves, he became afraid, and began to sink, and cried out, "Lord save me!" Jesus reached out his hands, and caught him, and said, "O thou of little faith, why didst thou doubt?" When they were come into the boat, the wind ceased. Then they that were in the ship came, saying, "Truly, thou art the Son of God."

IN THE PLAIN OF GENNESARET

Matthew 13:34-56; *Mark* 6:53-56

They landed on the shore of Gennesaret, on the west side of the sea, a level country which contained many villages and towns. As soon as the people of that section knew of the arrival of Jesus and his apostles, they brought the sick of their community to him to be healed.

"And wherever he went, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the hem of his garment, and as many as touched him were made whole."

EATING WITH UNWASHEN HANDS

Matthew 15:1-20; *Mark* 7:1-23

When the Scribes and the Pharisees who had come from Jerusalem, heard where Jesus was, they met him on the way to Capernaum, perhaps, about the time the disciples were preparing to eat some food: and they noticed that the disciples did not wash their hands before they ate. And they asked Jesus why his disciples do not wash their hands before they eat. The elders and the Scribes had made many rules about washing the hands; also washing pots, cups, kettles, tables and other things. They were much afraid of becoming defiled (unclean). A Pharisee would not sit down to eat at the same table with a Greek or a Roman, for fear of becoming defiled. So you see the Pharisees were just as foolish about this matter of washing the hands, as they were about the sabbath day.

Jesus told the Pharisees that the elders changed the laws, which Moses gave to the people, and made rules of their own. These rules about washing the hands were made by the elders. God did not give such laws to Moses; and his disciples did not have to obey the laws of the elders.

Then Jesus called the people to him, and said it is not so important what goes into a person, as what comes out. Out of a person may come evil thoughts, murder, pride, foolishness, and so forth. It is more important to have good thoughts and kind hearts than to have bad hearts, and fuss about things that are not important.

The things that you see and hear, which are bad, need not become a part of your life. There are lots of good people, who hear swearing every day, yet they never swear. There are those who have been among tobacco users all their lives, yet they never use tobacco. Jesus did not mean that it is not necessary to keep clean. He knew that these Pharisees prided themselves in the fact that their bodies were clean, but their hearts were not clean. They were clean outside, but not inside. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, and it pleases God if we keep the body clean; but it is more important to have the Spirit in our lives. Many people, such as coal miners, have very dirty work to do, which soils their clothes and also their bodies; yet lots of these people have good honest hearts, and they wash themselves clean, and go to church on Sundays.

Jesus said this to the Pharisees before they left: "Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men'."

The Pharisees, of course, reported back to the temple authorities all that Jesus said. Jesus knew that they were angered by what he said; and he added, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."

JESUS, THE BREAD OF LIFE

John 6:24-71

From Gennasaret, Jesus passed on to Capernaum; and there he met those who had returned in ships from the place where he performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Their thought was to make him king.

Jesus knew that the time had come when he must make it very plain to the people that his kingdom was a spiritual kingdom. He said to them, "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labor not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat that endureth to everlasting life, which the Son of God shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed." God put his seal, or stamp of sonship on Jesus at the time he was baptized; when he said, "Thou art my beloved Son."

The people said, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" Jesus replied, "This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom God hath sent." They said he was to show them a sign, as Moses did, who gave them manna in the wilderness. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth in me shall never thirst." The Jews could not understand this spiritual gospel. They thought of him as the Son of Joseph, and not as the Son of God.

Jesus said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give him is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." Jesus gave his flesh to the world when he was crucified. The Jews said, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said, "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." Jesus meant that they who followed him, and trusted in him, and had his spirit in them, should live forever.

As Jesus spoke these words in the synagogue at Capernaum, his disciples did not understand, and murmured. Jesus asked what they would think, if they saw the Son of man ascend up where he was before. All of the apostles but Judas saw Jesus ascend to heaven forty days after he was crucified. Then they believed.

Jesus added, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life." The people were interested in miracles, but they were not so much interested in what he was saying. What he was trying to teach them was more important than the miracles.

Many of Jesus' disciples left him, and went no more with him, after he told them that he was the bread of life that was sent down from heaven. Then Jesus asked the Twelve if they would also go away. Peter said, "To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we are sure that thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

There was one of the Twelve who was not pleased with the spiritual gospel Jesus was teaching. He had thought of Jesus as the political Messiah, and may have thought of himself as the treasurer in the great kingdom. Judas did not know that the way of the cross leads home. Jesus saw into his heart, and said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

JESUS HEALS THE DAUGHTER OF THE PHOENICIAN WOMAN

(1) *Matthew* 15:21-28; *Mark* 7:24-31
(2) *Revelations* 7:9-10

If you will look on the map of east Mediterranean provinces, you will find the cities of Tyre and Sidon in the province of Phenice, which borders on Galilee. This province was mostly inhabited by Greeks and Phoenicians. Jesus and his disciples withdrew from Capernaum to the part of Galilee bordering on Phenice, because the Pharisees were seeking to arrest him. Jesus also wanted to give the people of Galilee time to quiet down. However, he could no longer hide away. He was watched closely.

A Greek woman from the region of Phoenicia found out where he was, and came to ask him to cast the evil spirit out of her daughter. She said, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil." Jesus did not answer immediately, and she kept on crying after them. The disciples asked Jesus to send her away. Then Jesus said to the woman, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel." He knew that she was not an Israelite, and he told her that he must first help the Israelites. Then she came near to Jesus and worshipped him, saying, "Lord, help me." Jesus said it was not right to take the children's bread and give it to *dogs.* That is what Israelites called Gentiles. She said, "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from *their master's table.*" If she was but a dog, she was under her Master's table. Then Jesus said, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And her daughter was made whole immediately. This is another instance when Jesus healed at a distance.

Jesus did not think that the woman was a dog compared with Israelites. No Israelite ever showed greater faith. She too was a daughter of Abraham, the father of the faithful. She was welcome to the Master's table.

In heaven there will be people from all the nations of the earth. In Revelations, it is written:

> "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice,

saying, 'Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb'."

"Just as I am, thou willt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

CHARLOTTE ELLIOT.

MIRACLES AMONG SEMI-HEATHEN PEOPLE

Mark 7:31-37; *Mar* 8:22-26

Jesus and his disciples could not remain long in the territory bordering on Phoenicia; for if it became noised abroad that he had cured the daughter of the woman of Sidon, there would be no rest for him after that. So he and his disciples passed over the upper Jordan into the country ruled by Philip, and went southward through Decapolis, which contained ten Greek cities.

"And on the way, they brought to him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they besought him to put his hand upon him. And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven he sighed, and saith unto him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'be opened.' And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosened, and he spake plain." Jesus could have given the word, and the man would have been healed; but the heathen deaf would have ascribed his cure to magic. Jesus employed means, and looked to heaven, and sighed. How natural all this appears to a teacher of the deaf. Teachers of the deaf know that this narrative is true on the face of it. Neither Greek nor Jew could have invented it.

"And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, 'He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak'." We, teachers of the deaf, can teach the deaf to speak, but we cannot make them hear. However, some of them learn to read speech so well that one hardly thinks of them as being deaf. We are again reminded of what the Baptist said of Jesus: "God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him."

"And he came to Bethsaida (Julias), and they brought a blind man unto him,and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked if he saw anything. He looked up, and said, 'I see men as trees walking.' After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up. And he was restored, and saw every man clearly." Jesus wanted these heathen people to see that they were not being cured by magic. This is the only gradual cure recorded.

These people were to keep quiet about the cures, but they spread the news.

JESUS FEEDS FOUR THOUSAND AMONG THE GENTILES

Matthew 15:29-39; *Mark* 8:1-10

These cures among the gentiles on the east side of the sea of Galilee caused great multitudes to gather; and Jesus went up into a mountain, and sat down there. "And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them. Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel."

This healing continued for three days, and the people had remained with Jesus. They must have been so deeply interested in the wonderful things Jesus did, that they forgot about the work at home. Jesus did not want them to go away hungry, and he asked the disciples how many loaves they had. There were seven loaves and two fishes. Jesus ordered the people to sit down on the ground. "And he took the seven loaves and the two fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, besides women and children." This was his good-bye banquet to the gentiles on the east side of the Sea of Galilee. "And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala" on the west coast in Galilee.

The disciples saw that there was power present to feed Gentiles as well as Israelites, and they heard the Gentiles glorify the God of Israel; they had also been relieved of the presence of the Pharisees for some time.

THE PHARISEES AND THE SADDUCEES WANT TO SEE A SIGN

Matthew 15:39-16; 1-12; *Mark* 8:10-21

When Jesus came to Magdala on the west side of the sea, he was confronted by Pharisees and Sadducees, who asked Jesus to show them a sign from heaven that he was the Christ.

Jesus said they could tell what kind of weather they were going to have by the way the sky looks, but they could not understand the times. They should have known that Jesus was the Christ by the works he was doing. Jesus told them that they were wicked hypocrites in asking for a sign, and no sign would be given them excepting the sign of the prophet Jonah. Jesus would not give them a sign to satisfy their curiosity. They must believe on the strength of his teaching and his miracles, just the same as others, without an additional sign for their benefit. They will ask for this sign again and again, and he will not give it. The devil also asked for a sign. He said, "If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." Jesus did miracles in the course of his ministry to help those in distress; and not to humor those who were enemies of true righteousness.

The disciples were witness that Jesus did not meet the challenge of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. It would cause them to think, and the presence of Judas in their midst, who saw no hope of gain in following Jesus, would not help to encourage them. As the boat sailed on to Bethsaida Julias, the disciples were more quiet than usual. When they came to the other side, they woke up to the fact that they had forgotten to take bread with them. Jesus told them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of Herod; but they did not understand. Then he explained that they were not to be deceived by the doctrine of the Pharisees. They were on the verge of doubt.

From Bethsaida Julias, they traveled northward toward Mount Hermon.

WHOM DO MEN SAY THAT I THE SON OF MAN AM?

Matthew 16:13-28; *Mark* 8:27-38; *Luke* 9:18-27

When Jesus came into the border of Caesarea Philippi, he asked of his disciples, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" They said, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some Elias; and other Jeremias, or one of the prophets." Then Jesus said, "But whom say ye that I am?" Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God." Jesus said, "Blessed art thou, Simon, son of Jonas: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

Then Jesus told the disciples that he would suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the scribes and the chief priests at Jerusalem. He would be killed, and would rise again the third day. Peter said these things would never happen to him. It was very thoughtless for Peter to say that; and Jesus said to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto me." Peter talked like one who wanted to make Jesus an earthly king, and not like a person who was talking for God. The evil spirit who tempted Jesus in the wilderness, when he offered Jesus all the kingdoms of the world, is the one who was speaking out of Peter's mouth.

Jesus said to his disciples, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." People who want to follow Jesus cannot be selfish. They must get rid of selfishness, and work for the right, though it may be dangerous to do so. He said, "What is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" We must fight the good fight of faith, even though we may lose friends. Thousands of Christians braved the lions and other forms of death. They feared not those who could kill the body, but not the soul. The world is better because the martyrs stood firm.

Jesus said, "The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works." In our earthly affairs, those who do not try do not succeed. It will be the same in the heavenly kingdom. If Jesus had not died on the cross, he would not have become the world's Savior.

What do you think of Jesus? Is he the Christ? Can you imagine a person who could show God to the people better than Jesus did? No; Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God. Peter spoke the truth. Let us live for Christ.

> "On Christ the solid rock I stand;
> All other ground is sinking sand."

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Matthew 17:1-13; *Mark* 9:2-13; *Luke* 9:28-36

Jesus and his disciples went northward and came to Mount Hermon. Here Jesus took Peter, James and John and went far up on the slope of the mountain. There was a question of great moment that Jesus had to decide, and he wanted to be alone with God in prayer. So he took his closest disciples with him and went up the mountain side to be free of the multitude.

A crisis had arisen in the ministry of Jesus. The people of Galilee had rejected him because he would not be their king, and it was believed that Herod was only waiting for a pretext to arrest him. Should he attend the coming feast at Jerusalem and face death, or not? Should he shift the scene of his ministry to the Gentile world, and acknowledge defeat in winning his own people? Jesus would do the will of his Father in Heaven. On this mountain side Jesus made the most momentous decision in all history. He decided to go to Jerusalem and face death for the good of the world. Hundreds of millions have been drawn to him because he made the great sacrifice. With this great decision came peace divine. His face became radiant, for the light of the face of God was reflected in his countenance. Jesus truly was the Son of God. He calmly went forth to face danger, and in the end, death on the cross. How wondrously Jesus showed God to the people!

Luke's account of the impression made upon the three disciples follows:

"As he prayed the fashion of his face was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening. And there talked with him two men, which were Moses and Elijah: who appeared in glory and spake of his death which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him. And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses and one for Elijah': not knowing what he said. While he thus spake, there came a cloud and overshadowed them: and they feared as they entered into the cloud. And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my beloved Son: hear him.' And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone."

On the way down the mountain, Jesus told these three disciples not to speak about this vision until he had risen from the dead. They questioned among themselves what *rising from the dead* should mean.

HEALING THE EPILEPTIC BOY

Matthew 17:14-21; *Mark* 9:14-29; *Luke* 9:37-42

When Jesus and the three disciples came to the foot of the mountain where the other disciples were, they found a large crowd; among whom were Scribes, who were arguing with the disciples about something. When the people saw Jesus coming, they were surprised and came running to him. Why were they surprised? Was it not because his face was still radiant with the light of the transfiguration?

Jesus asked the Scribes, "What question ye with them?"

And one of the crowd replied, “Master I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.”

Then Jesus said, “O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him unto me.” While the son was being brought he got one of his spells, and fell down. Jesus asked the father, “How long ago is it since this came upon him?” The father replied that he had been getting spells since he was a child. Then he said to Jesus, “If thou canst do anything, have pity on us, and help us.” Jesus said to him, “If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.” The father cried out with tears, “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” Then Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, and it left the child, who lay upon the ground as if dead. Some thought that the child was dead. Jesus took the boy by the hand, and lifted him up; and all were amazed at the mighty power of God.

We must do as this father did. We do not have perfect faith; and we should ask the Lord to help our unbelief.

When Jesus and his disciples were alone, they asked him why they could not cast out the evil spirit. He said, “This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting.”

CHAPTER VII.

HUMILITY

(1) Who Shall Be the Greatest in Heaven

(2) Blessing Little Children

Matthew 18:1-14; *Mark* 9:33-50; *Luke* 9:46-50

After leaving the neighborhood of Mount Hermon, Jesus and his disciples went back to Capernaum. On the way back the disciples disputed about who should be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus asked what they were disputing about on the way, after they had come into the house. They asked him who was the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. There were children in the house, and they were always glad to be with Jesus. Jesus took one of the little children in his arms and said, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."

Then Jesus told them to get rid of their selfishness. He said, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off. If thine eye offend thee, pluck it ou.t" He meant that they were to get rid of those things that prevent them from being better men. They were to be humble and peaceable and ready to serve. He said, "Have *salt* in yourselves, and have peace one with another." We put salt in food to make it taste agreeable. In the same way, they were to make themselves agreeable to each other, and stop thinking about who is to be first.

John said they had seen a person doing miracles in Jesus' name, and they told him to stop doing so because he was not one of the apostles. Jesus said, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. He that is not against us is on our side." Then he added, "Whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." Anyone who is doing good work in the name of Christ, will be rewarded. It makes no difference to what church he belongs. There may be some things written in the Bible to which he cannot assent; yet, if he wants to help in the work of the kingdom, he is accepted.

It took lots of instruction to make it plain to the disciples what things counted most in the heavenly kingdom. Some mothers brought young children to Jesus, that he might bless them. The disciples found fault with them for doing so. That displeased Jesus very much, and he said to the disciples, "Let the little children come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father. And he took them up in his arms, and put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

A few years ago, a man sixty years of age came to the pastor of a church stating that he wished to join the church. This man had held high offices, and was one of the promient men of his city. He came into a class of little boys who were being prepared by the pastor to join the church. The pastor said to him, "You need not come to the class with the little boys"; but the man replied that he wanted to come with them: he wanted to be just like them. How pleased all his family were to see him take that stand! He had waited long, but he came in the right spirit.

JESUS FORETELLS HIS DEATH AND RESURRECTION

Matthew 17:22-23; *Luke* 9:44-45

After Jesus had returned from Mount Hermon where he had been transfigured before the three disciples, he again told his disciples of his death, saying, "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after he is killed, he shall rise the third day. Let these sayings sink down into your ears; for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men." They understood not the saying, and feared to ask him about it. It is easier to understand after an event has taken place than before it has happened. The manner of his death and resurrection was made very plain to Jesus at the time of his transfiguration.

PETER OBTAINS TEMPLE TRIBUTE MONEY BY FISHING

Matthew 17:24-27

When it was known that Jesus had returned to his home in Capernaum, those who collected the temple tribute money came to the house and asked Peter if Jesus did not pay the half-shekel tribute money, which each Israelite was to pay into the temple treasury. Peter knew that the rulers at Jerusalem were trying to make trouble for Jesus, and to avoid trouble he said, "Yes," without consulting Jesus, who taught that his disciples were children of God and that it was not necessary for them to obey the temple ritual. In order not to offend the rulers, Jesus told Peter to catch fish to get money to pay the tax for both of them. The tax was about thirty-three cents for each of them.

Jesus never taught his disciples to disobey either the religious or secular authorities, but they were to work hard to make the kingdom of heaven prevail in this world. It is right to pay taxes, but we should work for better government all the time. The governing power at Jerusalem was corrupt; and in this day, government is poorly carried on in some of our large cities. Those in authority should give full value for all monies received.

FORGIVING

Matthek 18:21-35

Day by day, Jesus taught his disciples the lessons they had to learn; and as time went on, they became more like him. One day Peter came to Jesus, saying, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?" We do not think that Andrew had been giving his brother Peter any trouble. Peter simply wanted to know what the limit was in this matter of forgiving. Jesus replied that he should forgive him seventy times seven times. In other words, he was to forgive always. He should have a forgiving spirit.

Then Jesus told a story about forgiving. He said there was a certain king to whom a servant owed ten thousand talents. That was a large sum of money, and the servant was unable to pay the bill. The king ordered the man and his wife and his children to be sold, and the money was to be paid over to him. The servant fell on his knees before the king, and begged him to be patient with him, and he would pay all. Then the king pitied the man, and allowed the man to go free, and forgave him the debt.

This same servant left the palace, and on his way met a man who owed him only one hundred pence. He stepped up to the man, and took him by the throat, saying, "Pay me that which you owe me." The man fell on his knees, and begged that the creditor give him more time, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all." "And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." When other servants of the king found out what had happened, they told the king about it.

The king sent for the wicked servant, and said to him, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee that great debt, because thou desirest me: shouldst not thou also have pity on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?" The king was angry, and ordered the man to be delivered to his tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him."

Then Jesus added, "In the same way, shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not everyone his brother their treaspasses." When Jesus taught his disciples the Lord's prayer, he made it plain that they must forgive others if they expected to be forgiven. Our prayers will not be heard so long as we are not willing to forgive. The wicked servant wanted to be forgiven, but he was not willing to forgive. If we have the love of God in our hearts, we can forgive.

There was a man who had a very violent temper, and became unjustly angered at some of his neighbors, and would not speak to them, and otherwise despitefully used them. He attended revival services in the village church, and was led to decide for the better life as it is in Jesus Christ. The first thing he did the next day was to visit those whom he had ill-treated. He shook hands and told them how sorry he was, and that he had decided to live the Christian life. Everyone concerned was happy, and tears of joy were shed. That man had won a great victory, greater than is won on battlefields. The Holy Spirit in the heart can conquer and tame the proudest spirit.

JESUS ON THE WAY TO THE FEAST OF TABERNACLES

Luke 9:51-62; *John* 7:1-9

The time had come for Jesus to bid farewell to Galilee, where so many of his mighty works had been done. No more would he teach along the beautiful sea. Capernaum, which had been exalted unto heaven, would hear his voice no more. Let by their leaders, many of the people had been led to reject him; but there were true friends who knew him to be the Christ.

Already bands of pilgrims were on the way to attend the feast of Tabernacles, which came after the ingathering of grain and fruit in the autumn. It was the feast to commemorate the dwelling of the Israelites in tents while in the wilderness. It was also a feast of thanksgiving for the harvest and the fruit. The people lived in booths for seven days in Jerusalem. It was the most joyous of the festivals which the people attended. All of the men were supposed to attend this feast.

Jesus was not ready to go up to the feast on the day his brethren urged him to go in their company. They said he was to go into Judea, and let his disciples there also see the miracles which he does. They did not believe in his power, and they said, "*If* thou do these things, show thyself to the world." They could not understand how one who had grown up among them could be so much greater than themselves. How cruel their words must have seemed to him! They had tried to hinder him in his work before. Jesus was very patient with them, and said, "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready. The world cannot hate you." They were going along with the rest of the world. The world had no quarrel to pick with them. Jesus added that the world hated him, because he showed up the wickedness of the world. He taught that the kingdom of heaven was a spiritual kingdom; whereas the Jewish leaders were looking for a Messiah, who would overthrow Roman rule and make Jerusalem the capitol of the world. He was not the kind of Messiah for whom they were looking. He told his brethren that they were to go up to the feast, that he was not yet quite ready.

When Jesus was ready to go, he and his disciples set out on the direct road through Samaria; and he sent two of his disciples ahead to a Samaritan village to make arrangements for their stay. The Samaritans said they could not be friendly to one passing through their territory to attend a feast at Jerusalem. James and John proposed to Jesus to call down fire from heaven on the Samaritans. Jesus rebuked them, saying, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Jesus crossed the Jordan, and went south on the road the Jews generally took.

On the way, an enthusiastic Scribe came to Jesus, and said, "I will follow thee withersoever thou goest." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." The Samaritans even would not allow him to pass through their land. This Scribe, at least, was more sympathetic toward Jesus than the other faultfinding ones whom we have met.

Jesus said to another person, "Follow me." But the man said that he first must go and bury his father. Jesus said, "Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God." The Jewish law required the man to bury his father and to pass days in mourning. Jesus here meant to teach that the call to service in his kingdom was higher than the demands of the Jewish law. Other things must give way to the demands of the kingdom. In these days, men must not be so busy with other things that they do not have time to give to God.

Another said that he would follow Jesus, but he first wanted to go home to bid farewell to his family. Jesus said to him, "No man, having put his hands to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." You cannot draw a straight furrow if you are looking back all the time. Other things must not interfere with the things of God.

> "Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
> Of our life's wild restless sea;
> Day by day his sweet voice soundeth,
> Saying, 'Christian follow me.'"
>
> CECIL ALEXANDER.

MARY AND MARTHA

Luke 10:38-42

On the way to the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus was invited to the home of Martha in the village of Bethany, a few miles from Jerusalem. In that family were Martha, her sister Mary and her brother Lazarus.

While Martha busied herself in getting the meal ready, Mary entertained Jesus. Lazarus had already gone to the feast. Mary became much interested in the things that Jesus said. His words were so kind and gentle and wise, that she forgot about helping Martha prepare the meal. This made Martha a little impatient, and she came to Jesus, and said, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? Bid her therefore that she help me." Mary had been helping Martha before Jesus came. Jesus told Martha that she was too busy about many things. "Only one thing is needful; and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken from her." Mary had decided to live for God, and that was more important than getting something ready to eat. Most people are like Martha. They are over anxious about the material things of this life. The things of the spirit are more important.

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

John—Chapter 7

Jesus went up to the feast after nearly all the other people had gone. He went as if in secret. The people at the feast sought him, and asked where he is. Some said that he was a good man: others said that he deceives the people. All spoke in low tones, because they feared the rulers of the people.

About the middle of the feast, Jesus went up into the temple and taught. All marveled at his wisdom and learning; for he had never been taught by the rabbins. Jesus said to the people, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." People who love God know God's words when they are spoken.

Jesus told the people that he came from God, that God sent him. This made the rulers angry; but they were afraid to arrest him. Some said that Jesus was the Christ, because no one could do greater miracles than he had done. Others said that when Christ comes, no person will know where he came from. The Pharisees sent officers to arrest him; but they went back to the Pharisees without him. The officers said, "Never man spake like this man."

Jesus knew that the time was drawing near when he would be crucified, and he said to the people, "Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me. Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, there ye cannot come." The people wondered where he would go. Would he go to teach the Gentiles? Jesus meant that he would go back to heaven from whence he had come.

On the last day of the feast, the priest brought water in a golden vessel from the Pool of Siloam; and, ascending the steps of the altar, poured out the water amid the sound of trumpets, in the sight of all the people. Just as the sound of the trumpets ceased, Jesus cried out, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Jesus was speaking of the Holy Spirit which would come to those who believe. Jesus baptizes with the Holy Spirit. A person who has the Holy Spirit in him is like a fountain of pure water. His life is a blessing to all about him.

When the people heard what Jesus said, they were sure that he was the Christ; but the rulers said that Christ would be descended from David, and would come out of Bethlehem. As you know, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and was descended from King David. The rulers thought that Jesus was born in Nazareth, in the province of Galilee.

The Pharisees said that the people who believed in Jesus were accursed, because they did not know the law. Nicodemus, who was one of the Pharisees, said to those who were so harshly speaking against Jesus, "Doth our law condemn a man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?" (He was the one who had come to Jesus by night, and knew about his teaching, and believed in him.)

The feast was at an end, and all the people went to their homes. The rulers had expected to arrest Jesus during the feast; but he left the feast without being arrested.

THE ADULTEROUS WOMAN

John 8:1-11

During the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus did not sleep in Jerusalem at night. His friends would not want him to stay at their homes, for fear of those who were seeking to kill him. Jesus passed the nights on the Mount of Olives, and came to the temple to teach in the morning. There the Scribes and Pharisees brought to him a woman taken in adultery. Jesus was not the Judge. They should have taken her before the person who decided such cases. They were trying to lay a trap for Jesus, so they might accuse him.

They told Jesus that the law of Moses commanded such a woman to be stoned: "But what sayeth thou?" If he said that she should not be stoned, they would say that he was trying to break down the law of Moses. If he would ask them to let her go, they would say that he did not oppose such sins; that he was the friend of sinners; as they had so often said of him.

"Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he heard them not. They thought that they had Jesus in a fix, and that he was afraid to answer: so they demanded that he say what should be done. He raised himself, and said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." Then he wrote on the ground again, and one by one from the oldest to the youngest, they went out. When Jesus looked up, he found only the woman; and he said to her, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."

These men were all sinners, and they felt guilty; and were not in a frame of mind to throw stones. Perhaps, Jesus wrote a few words on the ground that showed that he knew all about their past lives. They would not stay after that.

JESUS, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

John 8:12-32

Jesus went into the treasury room of the temple, and taught there. He said, "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." The Pharisees replied that he was praising himself. Jesus replied that his Father was his witness. He gave him the power to do miracles, so that the people might see that he was the Christ. Then Jesus said that he was soon going away, and they could not come to him. They would die in their sins, because they did not believe that he was the Christ. Then he added, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, so I speak. He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." As he spoke these words, many believed on him. He told those who believed to keep on believing, and the truth would make them free.

"Once I was blind,
But now I can see;
The Light of the world is Jesus."

CHILDREN OF ABRAHAM

John

When Jesus told them that the truth would set them free, the unbelieving Pharisees said they were Abraham's children, and were never in bondage to any man. He said they were the servants of sin, because they wanted to kill him, who was telling them the truth. Abraham would not have thought of killing a righteous man. "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

Jesus then said, "Truly, truly, I say unto you, 'If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death'." If we believe Jesus to be the Christ and follow him, we shall live forever.

The Pharisees said, "Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?" Jesus said, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad." They said, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?" Jesus replied, "Before Abraham was, I am." Then they took up stones to cast at him, but he went out of the temple through their midst.

JESUS HEALS A MAN BORN BLIND

John—Chapter 9

As Jesus was going along his way in Jerusalem, he saw a man which was born blind from his birth. His disciples asked him who was to blame that this man was born blind. Jesus said no one was to blame. Then he said, "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work. As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." Then he put spit on some earth, and made clay, and put it on the blind man's eyes, and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam. The man did so, and received his sight. When the neighbors saw him, they said, "Is not this he that sat and begged?" He said that he was the man. Then they asked how he received his sight; and he said that a man made clay and put it on his eyes and told him to wash in the Pool of Siloam: "and I went, and washed, and received sight."

Jesus did this miracle on the sabbath day: and the man was brought to the Pharisees, who wanted to know all about it. They said, "this man is not of God because he keepeth not the sabbath day." Others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such miracles?" The Pharisees asked the man what he thought. He said, "He is a prophet."

The Pharisees did not believe that the man ever was blind; and they asked his parents if the man was born blind, and how he received his sight. The parents said the man was their son, and he was born blind; but they did not know how he had received sight. They said their son was of age, and they were to ask him. The Pharisees had agreed to put out of the synagogue any man who confessed Jesus to be the Christ; and that was the reason his parents told them to ask the son. The Pharisees told the man to give God the praise: "we know that this man is a sinner." The man replied that he did not know whether he was a sinner or not: "one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see."

The Pharisees told the man that they were Moses' disciples. "We know that God spoke to Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is." The man thought it very strange that they did not know the man who had power to open his eyes. He said, "Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one born blind. If this man were not of God he could do nothing." They said that he was born in sin, and he must not pretend to teach them, "and they cast him out."

Jesus heard that the Pharisees had cast the man out; and when he met him, he asked him if he believed in the Son of God. The man said, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe in him?" Jesus said, "Thou hast both seen him and it is he that talketh with thee." And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshipped him.

DINING IN THE HOUSE OF A PHARISEE ON THE SABBATH

(a) HEALING THE MAN WITH THE DROPSY
(b) JESUS TEACHES HUMILITY
(c) THE NEGLECTED FEAST

Luke 14:1-24

One of the chief Pharisees invited Jesus to dine with him on the sabbath day. He had also invited a number of lawyers and doctors of the law, and a man with the dropsy. These people wanted to get closely acquainted with Jesus, and the man with the dropsy was invited to see if Jesus would heal him on the sabbath.

Jesus, looking at the lawyers and Pharisees, said, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath day?" They kept silent; and Jesus healed the man, and let him go. Then he said to them, "Which of you shall have an ox fallen into a pit, and will not immediately pull him out on the sabbath day?" They did not make reply, because they could not resist the truth of what he said.

Jesus noticed that the lawyers and doctors took the seats nearest to the host that were still left. That led him to tell them a parable. He said, "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the best seat (the one nearest to the host); lest a more honorable than thou be bidden by him; and he that invited thee and him come and say to thee, 'Give this man place'; and thou begin with shame to take the seat farthest from the host." Jesus added that it was better to take the seat farthest from the host at first, and then, if he asks you to take a seat nearer to him, you will be honored before those who were invited;

"For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Then Jesus said to the host, "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, invite not thy friends, nor thy brethren; neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee." They would invite him to dine with them. Jesus said, "When thou makest a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind: and thou shalt be blessed: for they cannot pay thee back, and thou wilt be rewarded at the resurrection of the Just."

One of the Pharisees at the table said, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." That led Jesus to tell the following parable:

A certain man made a great feast, and invited many. When everything was ready, he sent a servant to tell them. They all began to make excuse. The first asked to be excused, because he has just bought some land, and he wanted to go and see it. Another said that he had just bought five yoke of oxen, and he wanted to go to try them out, and he asked to be excused. Another said that he had just married a wife and therefore he cannot come. When the servant told the master of the house about the excuses, he became angry, and told the servant to go out into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, and the maimed, and the halt and the blind. And the servant did so, and reported to the master that there was still room. The master told him to go out into the highways and hedges, and persuade them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you that none of these men that were invited shall taste of my supper.

This is a wonderful parable, and must have been understood by the Pharisees and lawyers at the table; for they were educated Jews. Jesus had first invited his own people to the gospel feast. When he sent the twelve apostles to preach, he told them to go to the Israelites, and not to others. These Israelites, led by the Pharisees and lawyers, did not accept him as the Christ; and now the Gentiles of every nation were to be invited. They were looked upon by the Jews as the poor, the maimed, the halt and the blind.

COVETOUSNESS

Luke 12:13-48

People who want things that belong to others are covetous. Jesus taught people to give and to help. Nobody is happy who spends his life in trying to acquire things for himself. Those are happy who strive to make the world better for all.

One day, while Jesus was teaching, a man asked him to speak to his brother, who had received the greater part of the property his father had left to his two sons. He was to ask his brother to divide the property equally. Probably, the father had given most of the property to the older brother.

Jesus said to this man, "Beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth." Jesus then told this story to show what a covetous man is like:

> "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years: take thine ease, eat, drink and be merry'." But God said unto him, 'Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be required of

thee: then whose shall these things be, which thou has provided?'" Jesus added, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God." This rich man was thinking only of his own comfort; he might have helped many a poorer man who needed help.

Then Jesus told his disciples not to be over-anxious about the needs of this life. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you." He told his disciples to sell what they have, and give alms to the poor; to provide treasure in heaven, where thieves do not break through and steal, and where moth do not corrupt. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

Jesus told these things to the disciples in the presence of a great multitude. He told all to keep their lights burning. That means that they were to do good daily. They were to be like men waiting for their Lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. "Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not." Death comes to many people when they least expect it.

Jesus taught that we are stewards, and must give an account of our work here in this life. If we have done well, we shall be richly rewarded. If we have done wickedly, or have done nothing, we shall not reap the reward of the just. Our thought should be to please God, and not to be covetous or selfish.

PARABLE OF THE BARREN FIG-TREE

Luke 13:6-9

Jesus spoke of his nation as of a fig-tree, and this is what he said:

> "A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, 'Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down: why cumbereth it the ground?' And he answering, saith unto him, 'Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it: and if it bear fruit, well, and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down'."

Jesus had been preaching to his nation three years, and he was looking to see if his preaching bore fruit in better living. The people did not repent; that is, those who were the leaders of the people did not accept him as the Messiah; and they influenced the people against him. It is proposed to labor with the people a while longer, and then if they do not bear fruit, the nation will be destroyed. They rejected him, and the nation was destroyed by the Romans.

CURE OF A WOMAN WITH A SPIRIT OF INFIRMITY

Luke 13:11-17

There was a woman who had an infirmity for eighteen years, who came into a synagogue in Perea on a sabbath day, when Jesus was preaching. She was bowed together, and could not raise herself up. When Jesus saw her, he said to her, "Woman, thou art released from thine infirmity." Then he laid his hand on her, and she became straight, and glorified God. The rustic ruler of the synagogue said to the people with indignation, "There are six days when men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." He took the part of the Pharisees.

The Lord then answered him, and said, "Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day? And when he said these things, all his adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him."

CHAPTER VIII.

JESUS, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

John—Chapter 10

The Jews held a feast at Jerusalem in the winter time, called the feast of the dedication. This was in memory of the dedication of the magnificent new temple. Jesus attended this feast and taught in the temple.

He said, "He that entereth not by the door into a sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. He that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep." He added, "The sheep know the voice of the shepherd, but they flee from the voice of strangers."

The rulers of the Jews did not understand this parable, and Jesus made the parable plainer. He said, "I am the door of the sheep. By me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers. The thief cometh not but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Then he added, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. He that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Jesus told these Scribes and Pharisees who were listening to him, that they were like the hired person, who did not care as much for the sheep as the owner of the sheep did. He was the good shepherd who would lay down his life for the sheep. He was the real leader. The other sheep which did not belong to this fold were the Gentiles who would believe on him, and who were by far the greater number. He also made it plain that he would lay down his life when the time came, and would take his life again. He proved this when he rose from the dead.

Many of these rulers of the Jews understood him, and what he said made them angry. They said, "He hath a devil, and is mad; why do you listen to him?" But others said, "These are not the words of him that hath a devil. Can a devil open the eyes of the blind?"

When Jesus was walking in that part of the temple called Solomon's Porch, the leaders came to him, and said, "How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ tell us plainly." He had told them many times: they simply wanted to accuse him. Jesus answered them, "I told you, and ye believed not. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they know me." Then Jesus said, "I and my Father are one"; and the leaders took up stones to stone him. There were many stones about; for they were still building at the temple. They did not throw the stones for some reason. There must have been a look of majesty in Jesus' face that prevented them.

Jesus said that he had shown them many good works. "For which of these works do ye stone me?" The leaders said that they did not stone him for a good work, but because he, being a man, made himself equal to God. They wanted to stone him, because they thought that he was guilty of blasphemy. He said, "If I do not the works of my Father, believe me not. But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works; that ye may know, and believe that the Father is in me and I in him." They wanted to arrest him; but he left the temple, and went to the other side of Jordan, where John at first baptized; and he stayed there a while. Many people came to him there, and many believed on him.

THE PARABLE OF THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25-37

A certain lawyer came to Jesus, saying, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law." He replied, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Jesus said, "This do, and thou shalt live." The lawyer said, "And who is my neighbor?" Then Jesus told this story to show what a neighbor is like:

"A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, which stripped him of all his clothes, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. A priest came down that way, and when he saw him, he passed by him on the other side. Likewise, a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day when he left, he gave money to the host, and told him to take care of him; and if it costs more, when I come again, I will repay you."

Then Jesus asked of the lawyer which of the three men he thought was neighbor to the man who fell among thieves. The lawyer replied that the one who showed mercy was a neighbor. Then Jesus said to him, "Go, and do thou likewise."

The priests and the Levites were considered among the best people of the Jews. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews, who had no dealings with them. This parable shows that there are good people among all nations and tribes. We must not look down on any nation. There are many bad people in the best of nations. Because you belong to a certain church, or race, or family, does not prove that you have a kind heart and are neighborly.

PARABLES OF THE LOST SHEEP; OF THE LOST COIN, AND OF THE PRODIGAL SON

Luke—Chapter 15

A large crowd of publicans and sinners had collected to hear Jesus preach; and it seems that they had invited Jesus to a feast; for the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, "This man receiveth sinners and eateth with them."

When Jesus heard their complaint, he spake this parable to them, saying, "Which of you having a hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing?" He will tell his neighbors about it. Jesus added, "that in the same way, there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance." The Pharisees and Scribes said nothing.

Then Jesus told them another parable. He said if a woman has ten pieces of silver in her heirloom and loses one, does she not light the candle and sweep the house, and hunt till she finds it? And if she finds it, she rejoices, and tells her neighbors about it. Jesus added, "Likewise, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth." The Pharisees and Scribes said nothing.

Then Jesus spoke one of the greatest parables he ever uttered. It is called the *Parable of the Prodigal Son.*

Jesus said that a certain man had two sons, and the younger asked the father to give him the share of goods that would fall to him. And the father divided his goods between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there shamefully wasted all his money in riotous living. Then there arose a great famine in that country, and he began to be in want. The only position he could get was to feed pigs for a man; and he was so hungry that he felt like eating the husks the pigs ate. Then he began to think about home. He knew that his father's servants had lots to eat, and he was dying of hunger. He decided to go home, and said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants'." He started for home, and when he was yet a great distance away, his father saw him coming. He had been looking for him, hoping that he would soon come home. The son looked like an outcast, and the father pitied him. He ran to him, and put his arms around his neck, and kissed him. But the son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." But the father said to his servants, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring here the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this, my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost, and is found." And they began to be merry.

The older son had been in the field at work. When he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing; and he asked one of the servants what these things mean. He told him that the brother had come home, and the father had killed the fatted calf, because he had received him safe and sound. And the older brother was angry, and would not go in. The father came out and begged him to come in; but the older brother said that he had served him these many years and always obeyed him, and yet he had never given him a kid to make merry with his friends. "But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." The father said, "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was right that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

The Scribes and Pharisees must have understood this parable. They were like the older brother. They were not glad that the publicans and sinners, who were God's disobedient children, were loved by Jesus, who was trying to win them back to the Father's house. They, too, were angry like the older brother.

Let us not misunderstand this parable. There is joy in heaven when a sinner returns; but what of the many sinners that do not return? Would the younger son have met his father if he had not started for home? Jesus hated sin, and he tried to win the sinner back to God. It is better and safer not to go astray. Are we doing anything toward preventing others from going astray? Do we in any way help to maintain high ideals in our city and in our nation?

THE UNJUST STEWARD

Luke 16:1-15

Jesus told his disciples the following parable:

There was a certain rich man who had a steward, whom he accused of wasting his good. He told the steward to render his account; for he was no longer to be steward. "Then the steward said to himself, 'What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed'."

The steward decided to make friends with those who owed his lord money by making their bills less. Perhaps, he had overcharged them in the first place, and that was the reason they had not been able to pay up to that time. His thought was that if his lord would take his position away from him, these people would help him. This steward was unjust, yet he was wise in looking out for the future.

In like manner the disciples of Jesus are to make themselves friends in heaven. They are to invest money and talents in such a way as will forward the kingdom of Christ in this world, and when they are compelled by death to leave their positions in this world, they will be received into heavenly mansions.

We are stewards of the money and goods that have been given into our keeping. They do not belong to us; and we are to be faithful in making good use of these things that have been entrusted to us. Those who are thoughtless and wasteful in money matters will probably not succeed in spiritual matters.

The Pharisees, who were very covetous, were listening to what Jesus was saying; and when he said, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon," they derided him. He had hit them in a very tender spot. Jesus said to them, "Ye are they that justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts."

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke 16:19-31

While Jesus was speaking of riches and stewardship, he told the following parable:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen," and had lots of the best things to eat every day. There was also a very poor man, full of sores, named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate. He probably could not walk, and some people had carried him there. He desired to be fed on the things that were left on the plates after others had eaten. The rich man kept a number of dogs, and these licked the sores of the poor man as he lay at the gate.

In the course of time both men died. Lazarus was carried to Abraham's bosom by angels, and the rich man was in great misery in hell: and as he lifted up his eyes, he saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom in heaven, far away. And he cried, and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Abraham reminded him that while on earth he received good things, and Lazarus evil; but now Lazarus was comforted, and he was in torment; and he added that there was a great gulf between heaven and hell; so that no one could pass from one place to the other. Then the man, who was no longer rich, made one more request. He asked that Lazarus be sent to tell his five brothers about what was in store for those who lead a worldly life, so that they would not come into the place of torment where he was. Abraham replied that they have the scriptures; and if they do not obey them, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead to tell them.

We must not misinterpret this story. The poor man was not taken to heaven because he was poor, and the rich man was not sent to hell because he was rich. The rich man was in misery because he had been hard-hearted in this world. He had lived the selfish life. He cared not for others. God does not want us to be beggars in this life, but he does want us to have the spirit of helpfulness, and to labor for the good of all. This rich man should have given Lazarus a good meal, and should have put him in a place where he would have received help; as the good Samaritan did to the man wounded by thieves.

CHRIST RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

John 11:1-54

One day, while Jesus and his disciples were still in the province of Perea beyond the Jordan, news came that Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha, was sick. When Jesus heard about it, he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." He was going to raise Lazarus from the dead to prove to the Jews that he was the Son of God.

After two days, Jesus said to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again." The disciples said, "The Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?" Bethany, the home of Lazarus, was only two miles from Jerusalem; and the Jews had given orders that Jesus was to be arrested. So, the disciples felt that Jesus was running a great risk in going so near to Jerusalem.

Jesus knew what would happen, and he said to his disciples, "If any man walketh in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world." Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may wake him out of sleep." Jesus knew that Lazarus was dead.

When Jesus said that he was going to Lazarus, Thomas said to the other disciples, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." When Jesus came to Bethany Lazarus had been in the grave four days already.

When Martha heard that Jesus had come, she went forth to meet him; and she said to him, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." Jesus said unto her, "Thy brother shall rise again." Martha said, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said unto her, "I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?" Martha said, "Yes, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world."

Then Martha went to tell Mary, who was still in the house, that Jesus had come and wanted to see her. She told her secretly; because there were many Jews in the house, who had come to comfort Mary and Martha. Jesus was a short distance from the town, and Mary went with Martha to the place where he was. When the Jews saw Mary leave hastily, they thought that she was going to the grave to weep, and they followed her. When Mary came to Jesus she fell at his feet, and said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

When Jesus saw Mary weeping, and the Jews also weeping that were with her, he groaned in the spirit, and said, "Where have ye laid him?" They said, "Lord, come and see." Jesus wept. The Jews said, "Behold, how he loved him." Some said, "Could not this man who opened the eyes of the blind, have caused that even this man should not have died?"

Jesus came to the grave. It was a cave with a stone placed at the entrance. Jesus told them to remove the stone. Martha said that by this time corruption had begun. Jesus said to her, "Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?" After the stone was removed, Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth!" And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes; and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus told them to loose him and let him go.

Many of the Jews believed when they saw this; but some of them went and told the Pharisees what had happened. The Sanhedrin held a meeting to decide what to do. They said that this man does many miracles, and all men will believe on him; "and the Romans will come and take away both our place and nation." Caiaphas, the high priest, said that it was expedient that one person should die for the people, that the whole nation perish not.

He prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation, and that he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad; and from that day forth they decided to put him to death. Jesus heard about it, and left Judea; because he was not yet ready to be crucified.

CHAPTER IX.

HEALING TEN LEPERS

Luke 17:11-19

After Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, he left Judea, and went near to a town called Ephraim, on the border of Samaria. There he rested with his disciples for a while. Then it appears that those from Galilee, who were going up to Jerusalem to the feast, joined him somewhere in Galilee. Among these were many women. In passing through Perea, great multitudes followed him, and he healed, and taught them.

While Jesus and the Galileans were passing along the northern border of Samaria, they were met by ten lepers, who stood afar off, and cried out, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests, and as they went, they were cleansed. One of these was a Samaritan; who, when he found that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God; and he fell down before Jesus, and gave thanks. The others went on their way without thanking Jesus. They seemed to think that Jesus should have done that for them, because they were Israelites. They were very ungrateful.

DIVORCE

Mark 10:2-9; *Matthew* 19:3-9

When Jesus and his company of Galileans had come on the east side of the Jordan to the border of Judea, as he was teaching, the Pharisees asked him about the matter of divorce; tempting him to say something that would give an excuse for arresting him.

They asked him if it was lawful for a man to put away his wife. Jesus said, "What did Moses command you?" They said Moses allowed them to divorce their wives. Jesus said that Moses allowed them to do that because of the hardness of their hearts; but from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder."

Jesus added, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, commiteth adultery: and whoso marrieth her that is put away doth commit adultery. This statement hit these Pharisees rather hard, for they divorced wives for all sorts of excuses. In these days, no minister of the gospel of Jesus should unite in matrimony those who have been guilty of adultery. Let them go to the magistrates.

CHRIST BLESSES LITTLE CHILDREN

Matthew 19:13-15; *Mark* 10:13-16

In speaking on divorce, Jesus had made it very plain that marriage is a sacred relationship; and in so saying, he had spoken in defense of motherhood for all time. The women who heard his remarks, were greatly encouraged, and they glorified him. "And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked them that brought them." "But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." And he took them up in his arms, and put his hands upon them, and blessed them."

There is a majesty about Christ which the intellect alone cannot understand and appreciate. The Holy Spirit leads people to see his beauty; and it led the mothers of those children to see it.

THE RICH YOUNG RULER

Matthew 19:16-30; *Mark* 10:17-31

A rich young ruler came to Jesus and asked what he must do to have eternal life. He was very polite, and when he talked to Jesus he called him "Good Master." Jesus said to him, "Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments." The young man said that he had kept all the commandments from youth up: and asked what else he lacked. Jesus said, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell what thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me." When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions. Jesus loved the young man, but he showed him the great danger of riches. He loved his money more than his poor neighbors.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, "A rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven." The disciples were astonished. Then Jesus added, "How hard it is for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The disciples said, "Who then can be saved?" Jesus said, "With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."

Then Peter said, "Lo, we have left all and have followed thee." Then Jesus said, "Everyone that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred fold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

Poor people will not go to heaven because they are poor. It is just as necessary for a poor person to do what is right, as it is necessary for a rich man to do right. What makes it hard for rich people to follow God is because their thoughts are so much on their possessions that they do not give their time to heavenly things. Howbeit, we know of rich people who have given much to advance the kingdom of heaven on earth. Both rich and poor must be humble, and do the best they can to please God. The one who has much must give much, but the one who has little must not forget that he too must do his share. It was the fellow who had only the one talent who buried it in the earth.

PARABLE OF THE LABORERS

Matthew 20:1-16

Jesus said the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man who went out early in the morning to hire laborers. He agreed to pay them a penny a day. Later on, he saw other men standing idle, and he hired them for a penny; and some hours later, he hired others for the same wage. Toward the close of the day, he saw others idle, and he employed those saying, that he would pay them what is right.

When evening came, the Lord of the vineyard said to his steward, "Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first." He gave each of the laborers a penny. Those who worked the whole day got the same as those who worked for only one hour.

When those who worked the whole day saw that those who worked for only one hour received as much as they did, they complained, saying, "These last have worked but one hour, and thou makest them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and the heat of the day." The lord answered one of them, saying, "Friend I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree to work for a penny? Take what is thine and go thy way."

Peter had previously reminded the Lord of the great sacrifice the apostles had made in following him, and he wanted to know what they might expect. In the kingdom of heaven, it is not a case of so much pay for so much work. We do not win heaven on the basis of self-righteousness. We win by the grace of the one who died for us. We must just trust him, and work in his vineyard. God will be fair and exceedingly generous.

WHO WILL BE THE FIRST IN HEAVEN?

Matthew 20:20-28

The mother of James and John came with them to Jesus, and asked him to grant that her sons might sit one on his right hand and the other on his left, in his kindom. Jesus told them that they did not know what they were asking; and he asked if they could bear all the sufferings that he was to pass through. They said that they would be able. He said they would have to suffer much, but it was not for him to decide who should sit on his right hand or on his left. His Father would decide that. The other apostles were indignant at James and John for making such a request.

This shows how little the kingdom of heaven was understood, and Jesus gave them another lesson. He said that in the kingdoms of this world, those who are great have authority over others; but in the kingdom of heaven, "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Those who are willing to make sacrifices for the kingdom of heaven will stand among the first in heaven.

THE PHARISEE AND PUBLICAN AT PRAYER

Luke 18:9-14

Jesus spoke this parable to the Pharisees, who thought they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee and the other a publican. The Pharisee prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess." The publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner." "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

If we come to God thinking that we are self-righteous, we do not come in the right spirit. God wants us to be humble.

JESUS FORETELLS HIS PASSION

Luke 18:31-34

Jesus took his twelve apostles aside, and said that they were about to go up to Jerusalem, and there all the things that were written in the Old Testament about him would come to pass. He would be delivered up to the Gentiles, and he would be mocked, and spitefully treated, and spit upon. He would be scourged, and put to death: and the third day he would rise again. They did not comprehend what he said. After he rose from the dead, they understood, and remembered that he had told them.

CHAPTER X.

ZACCHAEUS, THE PUBLICAN

Luke 10:1-10

A few days before April 1st, Jesus and the Galilean band with him, crossed the fords of the Jordan to Judea and advanced toward Jericho; the city of palm trees, surrounded by sweet scented fields of balsam, in the plain of Jericho, the Eden of Palestine.

It was noised abroad that Jesus and the Galileans were coming, and great crowds assembled to see the mighty prophet going on to Jerusalem to face death; for all knew that the Sanhedrin had decreed that he must die; and they were seeking to arrest him, but they feared the multitude. From the Jordan to Jericho is about six miles, and in the course of several hours the Galileans were passing through the streets of the city.

Among those who were trying to get close to Jesus to see him was a man named Zacchaeus, the chief of the publicans, a rich man, to whom all the other publicans had to report. He was a short man, and was crowded into the background by the people who hated him; so that he could not see Jesus. He had heard so much about Jesus, and he wanted to see him badly. The Holy Spirit drew him, and he felt that he must get near to Jesus. He saw a sycamore tree farther on in the way, where there were not so many people, and he hurried on ahead of the crowd, and climbed the tree, so that he might see plainly.

When Jesus came to the tree, he looked up and saw Zacchaeus; and said: "Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down; for today I must abide at thy house." Zacchaeus must have been surprised that Jesus knew him. He made haste, and came down, and received Jesus joyfully. He took Jesus to his house and introduced him to his family, and gave him a good dinner.

When the crowd saw Jesus go with Zacchaeus to his home, they all murmured, saying, "He has gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner." Zacchaeus felt much honored that Jesus had chosen to come to his home, and he decided to live for God. He said to Jesus before that great crowd, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I will give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." And Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which is lost."

Zacchaeus obeyed the law of Moses in restoring four times as much as he had taken unjustly. In giving half of his goods to the poor, he far exceeded the demands of the law. The joy of salvation was in his heart, and that led him to do much more than the law required. No doubt, all of Zacchaeus' family decided for God and righteousness that day.

The slogan of the new doctrines was to seek and to save the lost. The multitude could not grasp that. The old bottles could not hold the new wine. We wonder if some of this crowd did not yell "Crucify him" about a week later in Jerusalem?

HEALING BLIND BARTIMEUS

Mark 10:46-52

"As he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus sat by the wayside begging." He heard lots of people passing by, and he wondered what it all meant: and they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. When he heard that, he cried out, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." Jesus stopped, and told those near to the blind man to bring him to him. When he came near, Jesus asked, "What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?" And he said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Jesus said, "Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee." And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

That is what Jesus showed to the City of Palm Trees.

THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS

Luke 19:11-27

As Jesus was drawing near to Jerusalem, and his followers thought that the kingdom of God was about to appear, Jesus told the Parable of the Pounds to check this thought.

He said, "A certain nobleman went to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. Before he went, he gave each of his servants a pound of money to trade with while he was gone. The citizens of his country hated him, and sent a message after him, saying that they did not want him to rule over them.

"After he returned, he asked each of his servants how he had made out in his trading. The first said that he had gained ten pounds by trading with the one pound that had been given him. That was very good; and as a reward, he was given the rule of ten cities. The next servant reported that he had gained five pounds. He was made the ruler over five cities. Then one reported that he did not trade at all, and he returned his pound to his lord. He was a wicked lazy servant, and his pound was given to the one who had ten pounds, because he would make good use of it. Then the nobleman added that those enemies, which would not have him reign over them were to be brought before him, and slain."

This is what the parable means: Jesus is the Nobleman who was going to heaven to receive his kingdom from his Father. The Jewish rulers are those who did not want Jesus to rule over them. The servants are the disciples, who are left here in the world to carry on the work of the kingdom. Those who have done a big work for Jesus will be rewarded according to their work. Those who have done nothing, will receive no reward at all. The wicked people, who would not have Jesus rule over them were destroyed when Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans.

Measured by our own way of thinking, what can those expect to inherit, who have done nothing to further the cause of Christ in the world? In our schools, those who do not study and who do not care, fail on examinations, and are dropped from their classes. "According to your thought so be it unto you." There will be no excuse, judged by our own thinking, for those who do not try. Let us do our best to win honors in the kingdom of heaven.

MARY ANOINTS THE BODY OF JESUS

Matthew 26:6-13; *Mark* 14:3-9; *John* 12:1-9

Six days before the Passover, on a Friday, Jesus came to Bethany, only about two miles from Jerusalem. The people of Bethany knew that he was coming, and they had prepared a supper for him at the house of Simon the leper. If this man had been cured of leprosy by Jesus, he would now show him every mark of sympathy. All in Bethany knew that Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead and all would strive to do him honor. Jews from

Jerusalem had also come to meet Jesus and to see Lazarus. "The chief priests consulted that they might put Lazarus also to death; because by reason of him, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus." The great crowd of sympathizers prevented the priests from carrying their design into effect in Bethany; and they had to wait for an opportunity.

Jesus, Lazarus and the twelve disciples sat at the table. Probably, Simon and others sat either at that table or at other tables. Martha was one of those who served.

While they were at the table, Mary, the sister of Martha, came with an alabaster box of spikenard, and poured the precious ointment on the head and feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

"But when the disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, 'To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and the money given to the poor'." When Jesus knew their thoughts, he said, "Why trouble ye the woman; for she hath wrought a good work upon me. For ye have the poor with you always; but me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial. Verily I say unto you, 'Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that the woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her'." John says that it was Judas who said, "Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and the money given to the poor?" Not that Judas cared for the poor did he say that, but because he was a thief.

Mary showed her great love for Jesus, who had led her to decide to live for God, when he was at her home at a previous time. She also knew, even better than his apostles, that the time had come when he was to die. With the joy of sins forgiven in her heart, she had kept this ointment for this annointing. She was glad to make this sacrifice. What have dollars to do with everlasting love?

JESUS ENTERS JERUSALEM ON PALM SUNDAY

Matthew 21:1-7; *Mark* 11:1-11; *Luke* 19:28-48; *John* 12:12-19

Before Jesus left Bethany, he sent two of his disciples to the village of Bethphage for a colt they would find tied there. This was a young colt on which no one had ever ridden. Jesus said that if anyone asks why they were loosing the colt, they were to say, "The Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither." The disciples found the colt; and answered those who questioned them, as Jesus had directed, and they were allowed to take him.

When the colt was brought, they cast their garments on him, and Jesus sat on him. Many spread their garments on the road for Jesus to ride over them: others cut branches off the trees, and strewed them in the way. Those that followed and those that went ahead, cried, saying, "Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest." Some Pharisees in the crowd asked Jesus to silence the people; but Jesus said that if the people kept quiet, the stones would cry out. All these people were thinking of a material kingdom.

As Jesus looked on the city of Jerusalem, he wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee around, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation." This prophecy was literally fulfilled when the Romans destroyed the city in the year 70 A. D.

As Jesus and the great multitude moved through the narrow streets of Jerusalem, the people came to the doors, asking, "Who is this?" The multitude replied, "This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee."

Jesus entered into the temple; "and when he had looked round about on all things, and now the eventide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve."

Monday

THE BARREN FIG TREE DESERVES TO DIE

Matthew 21:17-22; *Mark* 11:12-14

After passing the night of Sunday in Bethany, Jesus and his disciples returned to Jerusalem on the following morning. On the way they saw a fig tree covered with leaves. This was rather unusual, for the time of figs was not yet, and the figs came before the leaves. All this Jesus knew, and they turned to look at the tree.

Perhaps, the tree spoken of represents the Jewish nation, and especially its pharisaic leaders from whom much was to be expected. Here was a people with rich memories, whose ancient leaders were chosen to speak for God, whose temple was the most beautiful in the world, now rejecting the Son of God and his teachings, which were the very words of God. This was the beautiful leafy tree, which deserved to die because it bore no fruit. Jesus said to this fig tree, "Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever."

In this age, the leafy fig tree without fruit also represents people who make a fine showing in the world and who bear no fruit for God. Both individuals and nations deserve to die when they bear no fruit for God. "The wages of sin is death."

JESUS A SECOND TIME CLEANSES THE TEMPLE

Matthew 21:12-17; *Mark* 11:12-19; *Luke* 19:45-60

When Jesus and his disciples came to the temple, he cast out them that bought and sold, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and he would not allow anybody to carry anything through the temple. He asked, "Is it not written, 'My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer?' But ye have made it a den of thieves." This, of course, made the chief priests angry; for they were getting a big income from those who were doing business in the temple: but they feared to arrest him, for the people listened to him intently.

The temple cleansed, Jesus was ready to teach and to heal; and the blind and the lame came to him, and he healed them. When the choir boys in the temple saw the wonderful healing, they shouted, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" This aroused the chief priests and the Scribes. They thought the boys were desecrating the temple by the noise they made; and they said to Jesus, "Hearest thou what these say?" Jesus said, "Yes; have ye never read, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?'" The boys' shouting for God was desecration, but buying and selling in the temple, and cheating the people, was all right; since the chief priests got a big income from the rentals!

"And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany."

JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED

Matthew 21:23-27; *Mark* 11:27-33; *Luke* 20:1-8

When Jesus and his disciples came to the temple he was met by a deputation from the Sanhedrin, who asked him where he got the authority to teach in the temple, and to cast out those who bought and sold things in the temple. In those days, the Sanhedrin gave men the right to preach and teach. Jesus had not been ordained by the Sanhedrin. His right came from God direct. Jesus was God's Son and he spoke as one having real authority, and not as the Scribes who were ordained by the Sanhedrin.

Jesus replied, "I will also ask you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things—'The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?'—answer me."

That question put them in a fix. If they said that it was from heaven, Jesus would say, "Why then did you not believe him?" If they said that it was of men; they feared the people: for all men held John as a prophet. They said to Jesus, "We cannot tell." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."

Jesus really answered the question asked by them; for John bore witness that Jesus was the Son of God, and as such had higher authority than the Sanhedrin. Instead of Jesus telling them that he was the Son of God, he simply referred to John, whom all the people held to have been a prophet.

IS IT LAWFUL TO GIVE TRIBUTE TO CAESAR?

Matthew 22:15-22; *Mark* 12:13-17; *Luke* 20:20-26

It would seem that there had been a meeting of the Sanhedrin, and they had thought out some questions to ask Jesus to get him into trouble. He had answered the first question about his authority, and now they sent some Pharisees and Herodians to "catch him in his words." They came to him with words of flattery, saying, "Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the word of God in truth: 'Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give?'" Jesus said to these hypocrites, "Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see it." He asked them whose image and superscription was on the penny. They said, "Caesar's." Then Jesus said, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God, the things that are God's." Jesus did not step into the trap they had set for him, and "they marveled at him."

If Jesus had said that it was not right to give tribute to Caesar, they would quickly have gone to the Roman governor Pilate, and told him that Jesus was guilty of treason, for he was telling the people that it is not right to pay tax to the Romans. If he had said that it was right to pay tax, he would have offended the strong National Party, whose object was to throw off the Roman rule; and it would have given the lie to his own claim of being Israel's Messiah-King.

It was easy for Jesus to answer that question; for his kingdom is not of this world. He is a spiritual king who seeks to rule in the hearts of men. He did not have their view of the Messiah. The money in use had been coined by the Romans: they governed the people. Every state is supported by taxation; of course, they should pay tax to the governing power.

THE WIDOW'S MITE

Matthew 12:41-44; *Luke* 21:1-4

In the temple at Jerusalem there were trumpet-shaped receptacles to receive the money offered for various objects; each trumpet bearing the inscription stating the purpose for which the money was to be used. Jesus sat opposite these, and saw the people casting their money into the treasury. This was an interesting sight. Some would appear cheerful as givers; others would make a show of their giving; and some would give much and give it gladly and humbly.

There was one person in whom Jesus was more interested than in all the others. A poor widow came timidly and gave all that she had — two mites. That was the smallest sum anyone was allowed to give. Jesus called the attention of the disciples to the gift and the giver, saying, "This poor widow cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury: for all they cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."

GREEKS WISH TO SEE JESUS

John 12:20-36

Some Greek proselytes had come up to the feast to worship. They had heard of the wonderful miracles done by Jesus, and they wanted to meet him. They told Philip that they wanted to meet Jesus, and he told Andrew; and Andrew and Philip brought them to Jesus.

Jesus said to the Greeks in the hearing of all, "The hour is coming that the Son of man should be glorified. . . . Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Jesus meant that the time had come for him to die, but his death would be like that of a grain of wheat planted in the ground. The grain dies, but from it rises a stalk bearing many grains. He was about to lay down his life as a sacrifice for the sins of the world; so that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. He said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto me." He died on the cross that he might lead millions from all nations unto him.

He also said, "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." This means that those who live just for themselves, not caring for the good of the world, will miss eternal life; for they will bear no fruit for the heavenly kingdom. Those who will give their lives for the good of the world, trying to live for God, even though they may suffer much, shall have eternal life in heaven as their reward. No true Christian can live a selfish life. "If any man would serve me, let him follow me."

Jesus said, "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour." Jesus had a body, just as we have; and he knew that he would have great pain when he would be crucified. The time was here, and he dreaded the cross, but he decided to bear the pain and the shame; and said, "Father, glorify thy name." Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again." God was glorified by the life of Jesus. Let us glorify him in our lives.

Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." He had made his decision, and he would overthrow the power of evil in the world; but not in every man's heart: only in the hearts of those who believe.

The Pharisees then said, "It is written in the law that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, 'The Son of man must be lifted up?' Who is this Son of man?" They did not understand how Christ could live forever after he had been crucified. Jesus said to them, "Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light. Believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." Then Jesus left them.

THE SADDUCEES AND THE RESURRECTION

Matthew 22:23-33; *Mark* 12:18-27; *Luke* 20:27-40

The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection, and they thought they could ask Jesus a question which would put him to ridicule. They would have succeeded, if their thought concerning the resurrection had been correct.

They said, "Master, Moses said, 'If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up children unto his brother; so that the family and the homstead be preserved'." They added that there were seven brothers in a family, and the first married a wife, and he died childless; then the second brother married her, and he died childless; and so on to the seventh; and finally, the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection, which one of the seven will have her for a wife?

Jesus replied, "They that be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Then Jesus spoke further about the resurrection to these Sadducees, who did not believe, saying, "That the dead are raised, Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord 'The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' For he is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him."

The Sadducees underrated the power of God, just as other materialists do in this age. Jesus was very patient with them, and quoted familiar scripture to them. There would be no honor in being the God of the dead, who could give neither praise nor show appreciation. Jesus showed the wonderful power of God when he rose from the dead. "The multitude were astonished at his doctrine."

WHICH IS THE GREAT COMMANDMENT?

Matthew 22:34-40; *Mark* 12:32-34

The Pharisees were much pleased to hear how the Sadducees had been put to silence by Jesus; and a group of them decided upon a question to ask him; and got one of their number, a lawyer, to put the question, saying, "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyseld. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

And the lawyer said unto him, "Well, Master, thou hast said the truth: for there is but one God. . . . And to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." Jesus replied, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." No man after that dared ask him any question.

WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST? WHOSE SON IS HE?

Matthew 22:41-46; *Mark* 12:35-37; *Luke* 20:41-44

The Pharisees were done asking questions, and Jesus asked them one. He said, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is he?" They said, "The son of David." Jesus said, "How then can David in spirit call him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?' "

Christ as God was David's Lord. Christ as man was the offspring of David; the son of Mary. Either the Pharisees did not want to acknowledge that Christ was God, or else they did not comprehend the scriptures. Jesus showed that they were incompetent to teach the truths of the Old Testament. "The common people heard him gladly."

THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES SIT IN MOSES' SEAT

Matthew 23:1-12; *Mark* 12:38-40; *Luke* 20:45-47

In speaking of the Scribes and Pharisees to his disciples and a crowd of people, Jesus said that they had taken the place of Moses. They had added so many extra rules of conduct to those laws which Moses had given, that Moses was really occupying a secondary place. Insofar as they taught the law and explained it, Jesus told the people to obey their teachings; but not to do as they did: "For they say and do not."

Jesus said that the Pharisees did everything for show. They made broad their phylacteries, and enlarged the borders of their garments. They chose the chief seats nearest to the host at feasts, and the foremost seats in the synagogues, and liked to be called Rabbi in the market-places.

The phylacteries were leathern boxes containing verses of scripture, which were strapped either on the forehead or on the left arm near the heart. They made these broad for show. The Jews wore borders, or fringe, on their garments. The Pharisees made these very broad to call attention to themselves. Jesus taught his disciples to be humble. He said, "Be not ye called 'Rabbi': for one is your master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your *father* upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. He that is greatest among you shall be your servant. Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

(1) THE PARABLE OF THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN

Matthew 21:33-46; *Mark* 12:1-12; *Luke* 20:9-18

A certain householder had a vineyard, which he let out to husbandmen, and went to a far country. When the fruit was ripe, he sent some of his servants to receive the fruit from the husbandmen. They beat one of the servants, killed another and stoned the third. Then he sent other servants, but the husbandmen treated them in the same way. Last of all he sent to them his son, saying, "They will have respect for my son." When they saw the son, they said among themselves, "This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on the inheritance." They cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

Then Jesus said to the priests, Scribes, Pharisees and rulers, "When the Lord of the vineyard cometh, what will he do with these husbandmen?" They said, "He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus then said, "Did ye never read in the scriptures, 'the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner'; this is the Lord's doings and it is marvelous in our eyes?" Then Jesus added, "Therefore I say unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone, shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." When they heard this parable, they knew that he spoke of them; and they wanted to arrest him, but they feared the large crowd, who listened to him and took him for a prophet.

In this parable the householder is God; the vineyard is the kingdom of God on earth; the husbandmen are the chief priests and elders of the Jews; the servants are the prophets God had sent at different times, and whom they had persecuted. The son whom he sent was Jesus, and they will kill him.

Jesus was the stone which the builders rejected. The chief priests and elders, who had the oversight of the Jewish church, were the builders, and they would not give Christ a place in the building. Rejected by them, he would be accepted by the Gentiles, and the kingdom of God would pass to them. Those who tried to pull the stone out of the chief corner were crushed to powder when the Romans destroyed the nation.

(2) PARABLE OF THE KING'S MARRIAGE FEAST

Matthew 22:1-14

After Jesus told the parable about the vineyard and the husbandmen, the priests, Scribes and Pharisees were silenced; but they were angry, and Jesus knew their thoughts.

He told them another parable, somewhat like the one he had just told them. He said the kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to tell those who were invited to the wedding that everything was ready: and they would not come. They made light of the invitation, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his business, and some treated the servants spitefully, and slew them.

When the king heard about it he was angry, and sent his armies, and destroyed those wicked murderers. Then he ordered his servants to invite others. They went out into the highways and crossroads, and gathered as many as they could find, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

When the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man who did not have on a wedding garment; and he said to him, "Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless." Then the king ordered him bound hand and foot, and to be carried away into outer darkness; "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."

This is another parable which shows that the leaders would reject Christ, and would kill many of the servants that give the gospel invitation, and that they in turn would reap the reward of their cruelty. The unbeliving Jews were the most persistent enemies of the early Christian church. Rejected by the Jews again and again, the gospel invitation was given to the Gentile nations. Many of the Gentiles would accept the invitation out of goodness of heart: some would be hypocrites, like the one who appeared without a wedding garment. The king knows these; and they will be separated from the righteous at the day of judgment, and will be punished. They will be speechless, because they have no defense to make. The wedding garment was within the reach of all. This man did not think it worth while to put on the garment of righteousness. He was only a nominal church member, and did not take the religion of Jesus Christ seriously.

DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM AND OF THE TEMPLE FORETOLD

Matthew—Chapter 24; *Mark—Chapter* 13; *Luke* 21:5-36

After Jesus had pronounced the woes upon the Pharisees, and was about to take his final leave of the temple, he said: "Behold I send you prophets and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify: and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias. . . . Verily I say unto you, 'All these things shall come upon this generation'."

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

As Jesus was leaving the temple, the disciples showed him the great buildings, and he said unto them, "There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down."

When they came to the Mount of Olives, where a good view was had of the walls of Jerusalem and of the beautiful temple of white marble, Jesus sat down. And Peter and Andrew, James and John, asked him privately when these things should happen, saying, "Tell us when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?"

Jesus said that many shall come in his name, and shall deceive many. "There shall be wars and rumors of wars. Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There shall be earthquakes and famine and pestilence. They shall deliver you up to councils, and ye shall be beaten in synagogues, and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake. Brother shall betray brother to death, and the father, the son; children shall rise up against parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake; but he that endureth unto the end shall be saved. When ye shall see Jerusalem surrounded with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them that are of Judea flee to the mountains, and let none from the country enter into the city: for these be the days of vengeance. In those days there shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of creation unto this time. Verily I say unto you that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done."

As to when the end of the age should be, none knoweth but the Father. "Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is: for the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore! for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning." But the gospel must first be published among all nations, before Jesus will return; and after that is accomplished, many years may pass before he will come. In the meantime, let us not be among those who say that the Lord delayeth his coming, and we engage in things that are not worthy of followers of the Master.

Let us remember that the things that were to happen before that generation passed, all came true. The conditions in Palestine before the destruction of Jerusalem were frightful. Even the high priest was so covetous that he had men appear on the threshing-floors to take the tithes which belonged to the priests. Men were murdered right and left in the temple area during the great feasts. False Christs appeared, who led many astray, and some to death. Judea was overrun with robbers. You can read about these things in "Antiquities of the Jews," volume 20, written by Josephus, who lived at that time, and was present at the destruction of Jerusalem.

In this war eleven hundred thousand were slain and died of disease and ninety-seven thousand were taken captive and sold into slavery. The horrors of the siege were indescribable. Famine and pestilence reigned in the city, and many were crucified facing the walls of Jerusalem. Heaps of the dead lay about the altar of the temple—the "house left desolate"; because they rejected the teachings of the Prince of Peace and crucifid him. No nation ever fought more bravely, and as the bravery was, so was the slaughter. "They who take the sword shall perish by the sword." That is not the way to settle the world's disputes.

When the Roman armies gathered in Palestine, the Christians, heeding the instructions of Christ, fled across the Jordan, and settled in the city of Pella, on the northern boundary of Perea, in the year 68 A. D.; and they were not involved in the destruction of Jerusalem.*

THE PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS

Matthew 25:1-13

Jesus told a few parables to his disciples concerning last things, while they were on the Mount of Olives. The first of these is the Parable of the Ten Virgins.

The kingdom of heaven may be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. Five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, "Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him." Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out." But the wise answered, saying, "Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." While they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Later, came the other virgins, saying,

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*Eusebius—Ecclesiastical History, Chap. 3-5.

"Lord, Lord, open to us." But he answered, "Verily I say unto you, 'I know you not.' Watch therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."

In the kingdom of heaven, each person must make his own preparation. We cannot lean on others. There is work for each one to do, and we cannot shift the responsibility. There are those who think that the Lord is not coming because he has tarried so long, and they are making no preparation to meet him. These will not be ready to meet him when he comes, and it will be too late to make ready when the cry goes forth that he is here. Has not the gospel been preached in every nation? Is not the time drawing near? Let us be up and doing in the vineyard of the Lord.

Perhaps, Jesus will meet every man as he passes out of this life. In that case, the above parable applies just the same. All the preparation must be made before you pass out; and, as the tree falls, so it lies.

2. THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

Matthew 25:14-30

The kingdom of heaven is as a person traveling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each one according to his ability.

The one who received the five talents, gained five more talents by trading; likewise, the one who received two talents gained two. But he that received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

After a long time the lord of those servants cometh and reckoneth with them. When the first servant who gained five talents made his report, the lord said, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord." The lord said the same to the one who gained two talents. Then he that had received the one talent came and said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art a hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine." The lord said, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him that hath ten talents. For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

This parable shows that as servants of Christ, we are expected to make use of such talents as we have in advancing the kingdom of heaven. The servant who had only one talent was not in sympathy with his master. If we are not in sympathy with any cause, we will do nothing for the cause. The servant did not fail his master because of the one talent, but because he lacked sympathy. He failed; and failure brings its own regret.

If we are faithful in a few things, we shall be trusted with greater responsibilities: if we are not even faithful in little things, we shall not be entrusted with anything, and we are unprofitable.

CHAPTER XI.

WEDNESDAY

(JUDAS DAY)

On this day, Jesus rested, probably, on the Mount of Olives in the neighborhood of Bethany. He made his disciples fully acquainted with the things that were about to happen; and Judas, who had expected to be the Treasurer of the great Messianic kingdom which was to be established with Jerusalem as the capitol of the world, had his hopes dashed to the ground by the plain statement of Jesus that he would be crucified in two days.

It seemed to Judas that he was embarked on a losing venture as one of the disciples; and his covetous nature impelled him to go over to the enemy, and find out how much they would give him, if he betrayed Jesus into their hands at a time when the multitude were not present to interfere. So it would appear that on this Wednesday afternoon, Judas went to the palace of the high priest, and offered to betray Jesus. There was a large meeting of the members of the Sanhedrin at the high priest's house, debating how they might take Jesus "by subtilty," and kill him. "Judas said unto them, 'How much will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you?'" They agreed to give him thirty pieces of silver, which was the price of a slave. The Lamb of God was sold for the sacrifice like any other sacrificial lamb. The agreement was closed. "And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."

When Judas was chosen as one of the apostles, he was showing great interest in the kingdom; and from that high elevation he drifted down to be the betrayer of his Lord.

However, it would seem that he thought from the beginning that the kingdom of heaven was what the Jews of that day were looking for—a kingdom with the capitol of the world at Jerusalem, and all the enemies of Judaism grovelling in the dust.

No, the doctrine of the lowly Jesus is not acceptable to men of the Judas brand. Only riches and power and ostentation appeal to that group. Humility, gentleness, meekness and service to others, is a creed to which they cannot subscribe.

THURSDAY

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES KEEP THE LAST PASSOVER

Matthew 26:17-25; *Mark* 14:12-21; *Luke* 22:7-18; *John* 13:1-30

Jesus and his disciples owned no house in Jerusalem, and would have to keep the feast in someone else's house. The disciples asked Jesus where they were to prepare the Passover feast. He told Peter and John to go into the city, and they would find a man bearing a pitcher of water. They were to follow him, and say to the goodman of the house, "The Master saith 'My time is at hand, Where is the guest-chamber where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples?' And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us." This goodman of the house was one of Jesus' friends, and he had a room prepared for Jesus and his disciples. There is good reason for believing that this man was the father of John Mark, who wrote the Gospel According to Mark.

Judas, the treasurer, generally attended to the buying of things needed, and he had probably bought a lamb and had it inspected on the preceding day when he met the members of the Sanhedrin, and agreed to betray Jesus.

Judas was not sent to make preparation for the feast, because that would disclose to him the place where the Passover would be kept, and he could inform the chief priest, who would send soldiers to capture Jesus and his disciples at the house where they were feasting. Jesus knew of Judas' transaction, and did not want the feast disturbed.

Peter and John went up to the temple and got the lamb Judas had bought. The part to be burned was removed from the lamb, and then they took the lamb to the goodman's house and roasted it. Other things had been prepared, and the feast was ready.

Early in the evening, after the sun had set, which was the next day, Jesus sat down with his disciples to eat the Passover. And he said, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you 'I will not any more eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, 'Take this and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come'."

After the first cup was passed, it was in order to wash hands according to the usual procedure, but Jesus substituted washing of the feet. There had been strife among them, as to which of them should be accounted the greatest. In other words, they had wrangled over the matter as to who should have the seat of honor next to Jesus, and in what order the others should be seated. Jesus took note of this and gave them an object lesson in humility.

Jesus laid aside his outer garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that, he poured water into a basin, and began to wash his disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. He probably began with Peter, who immediately objected. "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter said unto him, 'Lord dost thou wash my feet?' Jesus said to him, 'What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.' Peter said, 'Thou shalt never wash my feet.' Jesus replied, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me'." Peter felt that he had spoken rashly, and he said, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." Jesus said, that it was not necessary to wash anything but the feet, and he would be entirely clean.

Jesus also washed the feet of Judas. Think of it! The Lord who had commanded the wind and the waves, and they obeyed him, got down on his knees, and washed the feet of the man whom he knew would betray him! This man Judas in return sold his loving Lord for thirty pieces of silver, a few paltry dollars. The evil spirit tempted him to do this; and today it is leading others to sell out that which is best for filthy gain. The Judas crowd is quite large even today.

Jesus had laid aside his outer garments, because it would be rather tiresome to wash twenty-four feet. He then put away the basin and the towel, and put on his garments and took his seat; and said to them, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Lord and Master: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger:

and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For which is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth."

The honors go to those who serve. There is no pomp in the kingdom of heaven. We wonder what James and John were thinking about at this time. Their mother had asked that one might sit on his right side and the other on his left in his kingdom. This was the greatest object lesson in humility Jesus ever gave. There would be no more argument as to who would be the greatest after that. By the way, it appears that Judas had seated himself in the seat of honor to the left of Jesus.

And as they sat and did eat, Jesus became sorrowful, and said, "Verily, I say unto you, 'One of you that eateth with me shall betray me.' And they began to be sorrowful, saying one by one, 'Is it I?' Jesus said, 'It is one of the twelve that dippeth with me in the dish. The Son of man indeed goeth as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born'." Peter motioned to John, who sat at the right of Jesus, to ask Jesus of whom he spoke. Jesus quietly told John that it was the one to whom he would give the bread after he had dipped it in the broth. He gave it to Judas, who had not heard what Jesus said to John. Judas (seated to the left of Jesus) whispered to Jesus, "Master, is it I?" Jesus said, "Thou hast said." Then Jesus told Judas to do quickly what he was about to do. Judas felt that Jesus knew what he had in mind; and without waiting for Jesus to speak plain enough for all to understand, he left the room quickly; and it was night. How dark was that night for Judas!

The others thought that Jesus had sent Judas on some errand, and were not unduly agitated by his leaving.

THE LORD'S SUPPER

Matthew 26:26-29; *Mark* 14:22-25; *Luke* 22:19-20;
I Corinthians 11:23-26

Toward the close of the Passover feast, when hunger had been satisfied, and Judas had left the room, Jesus instituted the Lord's supper in the following manner:

"And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, 'This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.' Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you'."

Christ and his disciples kept the Passover according to the law for the last time. The flesh of the lamb was solemnly eaten in remembrance of the preservation of the Israelites by means of the blood of the lambs that had been sprinkled on the door-frames of their homes in Egypt. The Lord's Supper was instituted to memoralize the sacrifice of Jesus, the Lamb of God, on the cross of Calvary. Jesus died to save men from their sins. The bread is the symbol of the crucified body; the wine is the symbol of the blood that was shed. Jesus said, "Do this as often as you drink, for a memorial of me."

The disciples could not fully grasp the meaning of what Jesus had done; for this was done before he was crucified. After the crucifixion and the resurrection, the meaning of it all became plainer; and, yet, they were still looking for an earthly kingdom after he had risen from the dead and appeared among them; saying, "Lord, wilt thou again at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" Neither did they understand that the body would be broken, and the blood shed to redeem Gentiles as well as Jews. It took a vision, and a Cornelius filled with the Holy Spirit, to convince Peter and the other apostles, that Gentiles were included in the kingdom of grace, and that believers in all nations could "wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb."

SOME THINGS THAT WERE SAID ON PASSOVER NIGHT

After Judas went out, Jesus said, "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him." He was now to enter on his great suffering, and he would win the fight with evil. He told his disciples that he would be with them only a short time, and he gave them a new commandment: They should love one another as he had loved them. People would know that they were his disciples, if they loved each other. *John* 13:31-35.

PETER

When Jesus spoke of going away, Peter wanted to know where he was going. Jesus told Peter that he could not follow him now, but he would follow later. Peter wanted to know why he could not follow now. He said that he would lay down his life for Jesus. Jesus replied, "Truly, I say unto thee, the cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice." That statement made the disciples nervous. They felt that if Peter failed like that, they too would fail. They knew that serious events were about to happen. *John* 13:36:38.

LET NOT YOUR HEART BE TROUBLED

Jesus saw that all were becoming anxious, and he said, "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." They had left all to follow him, and now he was about to leave them. He asked them to trust him. They knew that he loved them. *John* 14:1-4.

THOMAS

Jesus said they knew where he was going, and they knew the way. Thomas said that they did not know where he was going, and did not know the way. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my father also." *John* 14:5-7.

PHILIP

Philip said they would be satisfied if Jesus showed them the Father. Jesus replied, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast not thou known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father. . . . Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else, believe me for the very works' sake." Jesus had lived a beautiful sinless life, and had done many miracles, and yet Philip had not seen God in Jesus. Philip wanted to see God with the natural eye, which is impossible, for God is a spirit.

All of the apostles understood better after Jesus rose from the dead, and after they had received their spiritual baptism. Then they understood that the kingdom of God is in people. *John* 14:8-11.

THE COMFORTER

The apostles became very sad at the thought that Jesus was about to leave them, and tears were shed. Jesus then said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments, and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you the Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. . . . I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all truth."

JUDAS, THE BROTHER OF JAMES

Judas said unto Jesus, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us and not unto the world?" Jesus answered by saying, "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings." There are thousands so encumbered with the pleasures of this life and in pursuit of gain, that they do not even take time to learn about the words of Jesus. They are simply natural men following their own inclinations. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him." The Spirit will not abide with such. After Judas received the baptism of the Spirit he understood better.

LET SORROW GIVE WAY TO JOY

We see that Peter, Thomas, Philip and Judas asked questions as fast as opportunity offered. This shows how anxious the apostles were. They paid closer attention than they were in the habit of doing. They were sorry that they had not appreciated many things that Jesus had told them before. Jesus said that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance the things he had taught them. He added, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." Seeing that they had great sorrow as they thought of his going away, Jesus reminded them that he was going to his Father, and that they should rejoice because of that. He again told them to love each other, as he had loved them. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." Jesus was about to do that. And he said they were his friends, if they kept his commandments.

The World Will Hate You

Jesus said, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. . . . The servant is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. . . . They will hate you for my name's sake. . . . They hated me without a cause. They shall put you out of the synagogues. Yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service."

Jesus had led a blameless life; a life of sympathy and of service. The leaders rejected him because he did not fit into their scheme. He is the king of a spiritual world. They wait in vain who look for a king of the Jews to rule the world!

The Disciples Understand

Jesus spoke these final words of comfort to the disciples, who at last understood in a measure:

"I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again I leave the world, and go to the Father."

The disciples understood, and said, "Now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask of thee: by this we believe that thou comest forth from God."

Jesus replied, "Do ye now believe? Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because my Father is with me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Jesus had overcome the world, but they had not. They who understand the word may not yet be the best followers. All of these men overcame the world later on; and so far as we know, laid down their lives for the cause of Christ. After they had received the baptism of the Spirit, they were ready to lay down their lives. "Perfect love casteth out fear." *John* 16:8-33.

JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS APOSTLES

John—Chapter 17

Before leaving the feast, after speaking his final words of comfort, Jesus prayed the prayer recorded in the Seventeenth chapter of the Gospel according to St. John. In this prayer Jesus makes it very plain that he left the glory which he had in heaven, and came to earth to be despised and rejected of men. He had spoken the words his Father had given him to speak, and had finished the work it was appointed him to do. He had shown God to the world and was now ready to be offered up, and to return to his former glory which he had with the Father from the beginning. He prayed for the apostles he was leaving in the world, and for the many millions who would confess his name, and do his will in time to come. He prayed that his disciples might behold his glory, and share it with him. "Father, I will that they may be with me."

GETHSEMANE

Matthew 26:36-56; *Mark* 14:26-52; *Luke* 22:39-53; *John* 18:1-14

After singing a hymn, probably psalm 113 and the five following, as was the custom, they set out for the Mount of Olives, crossing the brook Cedron. There was a garden at the foot of the Mount to which Jesus retired with his disciples. This garden, probably, belonged to a friend, who had offered it to Jesus and his disciples as a resting place. It contained olive trees and an olive press. They had made use of this garden before, and the place was well known to Judas. "And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew of the place: for Jesus oft times resorted hither with his disciples."

He told his disciples to sit and rest, while he went some distance further to pray. And he took with him Peter, James and John; and he became very sorrowful. He said, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." And Jesus prayed, saying, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt." When he came to the three disciples he found them asleep because of sorrow. Jesus said to Peter, "What! could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." He went a second time to pray, saying, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." When he turned to his disciples again, he found them asleep. A third time he prayed the same prayer. "Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going; behold he is at hand that doth betray me'."

While Jesus wrestled in great agony and won the mighty victory over evil, his foremost disciples slept. Who are we that we should offer criticism? They had been sorrowing all the evening, and their spirits were willing, but before they were aware of it, they were seized with slumber. One would think that they should have been able to keep awake one hour. Supposing that they had kept awake, and had informed Jesus of the approach of Judas, would he have fled? No, he had won the victory, and was ready to meet Judas. When he said, "Rise, let us be going," it was to meet Judas and "the multitude with swords and staves." He might have fled, and then there would have been no Lamb slain for the sins of the world. There would be no Savior of mankind. Jesus had told the Jews that he would lay down his life of himself; "no man taketh it from me." He offered himself for the sins of the world.

After Judas left the passover feast, he went to the chief priests and elders of the people, and offered to lead them to the place where Jesus and the disciples were. They gathered together a large multitude of the temple police and others, who with swords and staves, proceeded under the leadership of Judas, probably, going first to the house where the passover had been celebrated: and finding that Jesus and the disciples had already left, Judas led them to the garden, where he thought they would be.

In order that the right person might be arrested, Judas had agreed to give Jesus a kiss, as a signal. They came with torches and lanterns and weapons, and Jesus stepped forth and asked whom they seek. Judas at the head of the multitude stepped forth to kiss him. "But Jesus said unto him, 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?'" The disciples, seeing what was about to happen, said, "Lord, shall we smite with the sword?" and not having time to wait for a reply, Peter struck at the head of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, who was in the foreground, and cut off his right ear. Jesus told Peter to put his sword into the sheath, and added, "The cup which my Father giveth me, shall I not drink it?" "They that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Jesus immediately healed Malchus' ear, and said to the multitude, "Whom seek ye?" They replied, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus said, "I am he." They fell back to the ground. Again he asked, "Whom seek ye?" They said, "Jesus of Nazareth." Jesus answered, "I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, 'Of them thou gavest me, I have lost none'." Then Jesus said to the multitude, "Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves to take me? I sat daily in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." Then all the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. They could do nothing to help him, who was led away toward the gate through which the sheep for the temple sacrifices passed. Jesus, the Lamb of God, passed through the same gate as the other lambs to be sacrificed.

CHAPTER XII.

ANNAS AND CAIAPHAS

Matthew 26:57-68; *Mark* 14:53-65; *Luke* 22:54, 63-71; *John* 18:13, 14, 19-24

Jesus was hurried along rapidly, because it was thought that an attempt would be made to rescue him, if it came to the ears of Galileans that he had been arrested. They first went to the house of rich old Annas; the priest who owned a lot of temple booths in which things were sold for the sacrifices, and where money was exchanged for Jewish shekels. From these booths, Annas, who formerly was high priest, obtained very large revenue, and was a bitter enemy of Jesus, who had dared to cleanse the temple, and who had exposed the hypocrisy of the temple priesthood. Annas stood in the background, and Caiaphas, his son-in-law, was the high priest under his direction. The people held the temple thieves in such contempt that it was not safe for the greatest thief of them all, to occupy the position of high priest; so he had his son-in-law installed in that position.

Annas gladly approved of the arrest of Jesus, and sent him bound to Caiaphas. It is thought that he did not attend the trial at the house of Caiaphas, because he was to examine the sacrifices early the next morning to see that they were without blemish. In this case, he approved of Jesus as ready for the altar. How significant!

Caiaphas was the one who had said that it was expedient one man should die for the people, at the time when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. His house was not the meeting place of the Sanhedrin; and the meeting held there was very irregular. It was not a meeting of the Sanhedrin, and had no authority at all: but that made no difference to Caiaphas.

He asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine. Jesus answered, "I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue; and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing." They knew his doctrine, and had already given orders that those who believed in him were to be put out of the synagogues. Then Jesus said to Caiaphas, "Why asketh thou me? ask them which heard me what I said unto them." A prisoner is not supposed to give evidence against himself. Jesus' statement was so much to the point that one of Caiaphas' officers felt that he had to come to the rescue of the high priest by striking Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, "Answerest thou the high priest so?" This insolent act shows the temper of the assembly that was trying to bring about the death of Jesus. It was the cowardly act of one who was trying to curry favor with the high priest. Jesus answered, "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?" This wise statement brought no reply.

"Now the chief priests and elders, and all the council sought false witnesses against Jesus, to put him to death; but found none. . . . At the last came two false witnesses, and said, 'This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days'." The high priest could gather no evidence on the strength of which he could put Jesus to death, from the witnesses; and he sought to get evidence from Jesus himself; which, of course, he had no right to do. However, Jesus had decided to drink the cup his Father had given him. He would die for the sins of the world; and he replied when he had no need to do so.

The high priest said to Jesus, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God." Jesus replied that he was, and added, "Hereafter, ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." Then the high priest rent his clothes (which he was forbidden to do), saying, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? . . . What think ye?" They answered, "He is guilty of death." Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of the hands, while he was blindfolded, saying, "Prophecy unto us thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?"

Morning had come, and "all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death." They did not have the right to put him to death. The Romans had reserved that right; so they tied his hands together and led him away to Pontius Pilate, the governor. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

PETER'S DENIAL

Matthew 26:69-75; *Mark* 14:66-72; *Luke* 22:54-62;
John 18:15-18 *and* 25-27

Peter and another disciple (probably, John) followed the crowd who were taking Jesus to the high priest, at some distance. This other disciple knew the high priest, and was allowed to enter the room where Jesus was being tried, while Peter stood outside the door. The disciple who had entered missed Peter, and asked the maid who kept the door to admit him. She did so, and said to Peter, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" Peter replied, "I am not." And he proceeded to warm himself in company with the servants and officers who had made a fire; for it was cold. They looked on Peter as a stranger in their midst, and suspected him of being one of the Galileans. His speech and his clothes betrayed him.

Peter saw that he was attracting attention, and he went out on the porch, where another maid saw him, and said, "This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied with an oath, saying, "I do not know the man." He went in to the fire again. Then those who stood by said, "Surely thou art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee." And one of the servants related to Malchus, said, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" Then began Peter to curse and swear, saying, "I know not the man." And immediately the cock crew: and the Lord turned and looked upon Peter. Then Peter remembered the words of the Lord: "Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice." Peter went out and wept bitterly.

Let us not judge Peter too harshly. What will not the natural man do to save his life? This was the last time that Peter denied his Lord. Later, he died for his Master. He showed his love for his Master in that he followed him. He lacked judgment in entering a hall filled with enemies, where he could do no good.

JUDAS IN DESPAIR KILLS HIMSELF

Matthew 27:3-10; *Acts* 1:16-20; *I. Jeremiah* 19:

Judas was at the trial in the palace of Caiaphas, and saw and heard all that took place. He knew that Jesus was innocent, and he felt remorse when he saw him spit upon and abused, knowing that he had by his treachery brought this upon him. When he saw that Jesus was condemned to death by the Sanhedrin, and that he was about to be led before Pilate to have the Roman stamp of approval put on their verdict, that he might be crucified, he was in despair, and felt that he must get rid of the money he had obtained. With wild eyes and haggard face, "He brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood'." And they said, "What is that to us? See thou to that." And he cast down the thirty pieces of silver on the marble floor of the temple, and departed; but where could he go? He left the city and hanged himself, and fell among the sharp rocks; and the place is called "The Field of Blood." What do you think of the priests of the temple as spiritual advisers?

The chief priests took the silver pieces, which Judas threw on the temple floor; and decided that it was not proper to put the money into the treasury, because it was the price of blood. They used it later to buy the potter's field as a burial place for strangers. This is the field in which Judas killed himself, and where Jeremiah had been directed to prophecy against Jerusalem.

They had scruples about putting the money into the treasury. Where had they obtained it? Does the reader think they had taken up a collection among themselves when they obtained the money for Judas? *Money was their God!*

Everyone condemns Judas; yet we must admit that he bore testimony to the innocency of Jesus, and was heartily sorry for his great sin. After he bore his testimony, the chief priests proceeded to bring about the crucifixion of Jesus. They did not care if the blood of Jesus was innocent. Who is more to be condemned, they or Judas? Neither Annas nor Caiaphas repented: nay, they persecuted the apostles. Their hearts were hard, and they believed neither in heaven nor in hell. They were Sadducees, and *Money was their God!*

CHRIST BEFORE PILATE

Matthew 27:1-31; *Mark* 15:1-20; *Luke* 23:1-25;
John 18:28-40 *and* 19:1-16

There was no love lost between Pilate and the Jewish leaders, but they had to go to him to have Jesus condemned in a Roman court, and executed by Roman authority. If found guilty in a Roman court, he would be crucified, and that was the form of death the leaders most desired, because it was the most shameful. They wanted to brand Jesus with infamy, and sink his reputation forever. Another reason for going to Pilate was that the death sentence was in the hands of the Romans. The leaders of the Jews could have had Jesus killed by a mob, just as Stephen was killed later; but this might have caused an uprising by the people, many of whom were followers of Jesus. The safest plan was to have Jesus condemned and crucified by Roman authority.

Early in the morning they led Jesus from the palace of Caiaphas to the judgment-hall of Pontius Pilate. A large crowd would ordinarily gather; because it was a custom to release a prisoner condemned to death on passover day. The Jewish leaders instructed the people to ask for the release of Bar-Abbas, a sort of political anti-Christ, who had been found guilty of murder.

The Jewish leaders did not go into the judgment-hall, because they did not want to defile themselves by entering into the house of an uncircumcised Gentile before they ate the passover. So Pilate had to come out to them, and he asked what accusation they brought against the man. Impudently, they said, "If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee." Pilate told them to judge Jesus by their own law; but they replied, "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death." Then Pilate went into the hall, and called Jesus to him, and said, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Jesus said that he was; but he added, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews." Pilate said, "Art thou a king then?" Jesus said that he was, and added, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Everyone that is of the truth heareth my voice." Pilate said, "What is truth?"; but he did not stay for an answer. He faced the multitude, and said, "I find in him no fault at all."

Then the accusations became more fierce than ever. They said, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying, 'That he himself is Christ, a king.' He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place."

Pilate took no stock in what they said; for he knew that because of spite they had delivered Jesus unto him. However, when Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the man were a Galilean; and when he found out that he was a Galilean, he was glad; because he belonged to a province over which Herod ruled: and he sent him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at the time. Pilate thought that he would rid himself of the bloodthirsty mob by transferring the case to Herod.

When Herod saw Jesus, "he was exceedingly glad: for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things: and he hoped to have seen some miracles done by him." Herod asked many questions, but Jesus did not reply. This was the man who had murdered

John the Baptist, and Jesus would not deign to reply to him.

The chief priests and Scribes stood and vehemently accused Jesus before Herod; who abused him when he would do no miracle for him. He and his men jeered him as one that had lost his power. They mocked him and put a gorgeous robe on him; and sent him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate had not been friends before this; but Herod was pleased that Pilate had sent Jesus to him, because Jesus was a Galilean, and Herod and Pilate became friends.

Pilate's wife sent word to him, saying, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him."

When Jesus was returned to Pilate, he addressed the multitude before him, as follows, "Ye have brought this man unto me as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man touching those things whereof ye accuse him. No, nor yet Herod: for I sent you to him: and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him. I will therefore chastise him and release him." And, directed by the leaders, they cried out all at once, saying, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas!" Pilate, anxious to release Jesus, began to speak again; but they all cried, saying, "Crucify him, Crucify him!" He said to them again, "What evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go." With loud voices they demanded that he be crucified.

Then Pilate had Jesus scourged. His soldiers took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers. They stripped him and put on him a purple robe. And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, "Hail, king of the Jews!" and they spit on him, and took the reed and smote him on the head. After they mocked him, they took off the robe, and put his own raiment on him; and Pilate went forth, and said to the multitude, "Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him."

Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said unto them, "Behold the man!" When the chief priests and the officers saw him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify him, crucify him." Pilate said, "Take ye him, and crucify him; for I find no fault in him." They answered him, "We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God." When Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment-hall and said to Jesus, "From whence art thou?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Then said Pilate unto him, "Speakest thou not unto me? Knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?" Jesus replied, "Thou couldst have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin."

After Pilate heard Jesus make that statement, he determined to let Jesus go; but the multitude cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar." That statement made Pilate very uneasy, and he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place called the Pavement; and said to the Jews, "Behold your king." They cried, "Away with him, away with him; crucify him!" Pilate said, "Shall I crucify your king?"

The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." When Pilate saw that there was no use in arguing with them; that it simply ended in greater tumult, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." Then answered all the people, "His blood be on us, and our children." Then Pilate delivered him to be crucified, and released Barabbas, the murderer, as they desired.

At this same place, some thirty years later, three thousand six hundred persons were killed at the command of the governor. Many were scourged and crucified; and among these were some of the noblest citizens of Jerusalem.* A few years later, Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed, and over a million perished in Palestine.

Pilate was a coward, in giving way to the priests and elders and the rabble before him. He knew that Jesus was innocent, and he should have commanded his soldiers to drive away the mob from the place of judgment. There are men in public office today who are selling out the cause of righteousness because of pressure brought against them by influential people who have evil designs. They are on the same plane as Pilate, living in an age when the public conscience has been quickened by Christian influence.

Let us not be side-tracked, however, in bringing to notice the one yet more guilty than Pilate. Jesus said, "He that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." Pilate committed a great sin under pressure from people in high places; but Caiaphas sinned with malice aforethought. The Jewish priesthood had been entirely eclipsed by the teachings and the miracles of the gentle Galilean, who was the Son of God, manifested by the power conferred on him, and declared to be such by himself. He had exposed the hypocrisy of the priests, and their cup of spite was running over. Headed by Caiaphas, with old Annas goading on, they determined to kill Jesus, and became the slayers of the "Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world."

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*Josephus.

ON THE WAY TO CALVARY

Matthew 27:31-34; *Mark* 15:20-23; *Luke* 23:26-32; *John* 19:16-17

There were crosses at hand, and no time was lost in getting Jesus started on the way to Calvary, bearing his cross. It was heavy, and Jesus was hardly able to bear it after he had been so cruelly scourged and otherwise ill-treated. A man coming in from the country, who probably spoke in pity of Jesus, was compelled to bear the cross after Jesus; because they feared that Jesus might faint under the load, and die on the way; and then he could not be crucified. This man's name was Simon, and we know that he and his two sons became Christians. The priests who were in the crowd that followed, probably suggested to the soldiers that they were to compel Simon to bear the cross, as a reproach for his too ardent show of pity. So, Simon bore the cross, following after Jesus.

A great company of people followed Jesus, among whom were many women who pitied him. Jesus turned to them, and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me; but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in which they shall say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck.' Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us'." Many of the children of that generation saw the destruction of Jerusalem, and the dreadful horrors, such as have not been exceeded since the foundation of the world.

Jesus was not the only one bearing a cross in that great crowd going to the place of execution. There were two thieves bearing crosses, who were to be crucified with him. Perhaps, no one in that great crowd knew them, and they did not attract much attention. It may not have been the time for them to die; but it was thought desirable by those who wished to degrade Jesus still more, to have him crucified in the midst of culprits, as if he were the chief of them.

There was a place just outside of Jerusalem where culprits were executed. This was known as Golgotha, or Calvary, or the place of a skull. It was a small hill on the north side of the city, near to the Damascus gate. Here Jesus was crucified.

> "Oh, that old rugged cross, so despised by the world
> Has a wondrous attraction for me;
> For the dear Lamb of God left his glory above,
> To bear it to dark Calvary.
> So I'll cherish the old rugged cross
> Till my trophies at last I lay down;
> I will cling to the old rugged cross,
> And exchange it some day for a crown."
>
> Geo. Bennard.

JESUS CRUCIFIED

Matthew 27:35-56; *Mark* 15:23-41; *Luke* 23:33-49; *John* 19:18-30

Arriving at the place, the crosses were laid on the ground, with the foot of each cross near the socket or hole into which it was to be set. It was the custom to give wine to those who were to be put to death. "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts." To Jesus they offered wine mixed with gall, which was nauseous and not fit to drink. When he had tasted thereof, he refused it. Then they took off his garments, which went to the four soldiers who had charge of his crucifixion. They threw dice for his upper garment, the vesture, which was without seam, woven from the top throughout. It would be of no value if cut in four parts. Perhaps, the lucky soldier sold it later; it was valuable. Then his hands and his feet were nailed to the cross as it lay on the ground, and the cross was raised and let fall into the hole or socket prepared for it. The two thieves were crucified also, the one to the right of Jesus and the other to the left. "And the people stood beholding." Jesus said, "Father forgive them; for they know not what they do." They were forgiven.

The chief priests and the rulers stood among the rabble, and derided him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself, if he be the Christ, the chosen of God. If he be the king of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. He trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will save him: for he said, 'I am the Son of God'." Travellers on the road wagged their heads, saying, "Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself." The chief priests, Scribes and elders had put these words into the mouths of the people. Their malice knew no limit. The soldiers also mocked him, coming to him and offering him more of the bitter wine; and saying, "If thou be the king of the Jews, save thyself." One of the thieves railed at him, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." The other thief rebuked the one who spoke first. Both had heard Jesus pray to his Father to forgive, and yet one was hardened in heart though in the valley of the shadow of death. The other was softened in heart, and said, "We receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss"; and turning to Jesus, he said, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus said unto him, "Today thou shalt be with me in paradise."

One was taken, and the other left. So it is today: some believe; others mock.

Pilate had written a title on a board, and had the board with the inscription nailed to the top of the cross. And the writing was, "JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS." It was written in Hebrew, Greek and Latin. The chief priests wanted Pilate to change the inscription so that it would read that Jesus said that he was the king of the Jews. Pilate said, "What I have written, I have written." Pilate had written the true inscription, Jesus was the Messiah that was to come. They look in vain who look for another!

What had become of the friends of Jesus during his agony? Where were those brave disciples? Where was Peter? Listen to this: "Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene"; and John, the beloved disciple. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" Then said he to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And John took Mary to his own home, and cared for her.

Then a strange thing happened: it gradually became dark. The sun was eclipsed for three hours. During this period Jesus suffered silently, and the people stopped their jeering and mocking, for they were terrified by the gloom. When the sun began to brighten again, Jesus weary unto death, cried out in the Syriac language, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani! That is to say, My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" Some thought that he called for Elias, and when he said, "I thirst," one of them filled a sponge with vinegar, and held it to his mouth. The others said, "Let him alone; let us see if Elias will come to save him." Then Jesus said, "It is finished: Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." And he yielded up his spirit. "And behold, the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. . . . And when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous man: truly this was the Son of God.' And all the people who beheld that sight, smote their breasts, and returned. And all his acquaintances, and the women who followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome."

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime."
JNO. BOWRING.

THE BURIAL OF JESUS

Matthew 27:57-60; *Mark* 15:42-47; *Luke* 23:50-56; *John* 19:38-42

Jesus was dead, and the beginning of the sabbath day was close at hand; and the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies to remain on the crosses on the sabbath day; especially on this sabbath, which fell in the passover week. So they went to Pilate, and asked that the legs of those on the crosses might be broken to hasten their death, that they might be removed and buried out of sight. Pilate granted their request, and the soldiers broke the legs of the thieves; but when they came to Jesus they found him dead already, and they did not break his legs; but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and "forthwith came out blood and water." John was an eye-witness of this; and says, "For these things were done that the scriptures should be fulfilled, 'A bone of him shall not be broken'; and again another scripture saith, 'They shall look on him whom they pierced'."

The thought of the chief priests was that Jesus was to be buried with the thieves. They had their way in having him crucified, but God designed that his grave should not be with the wicked. Joseph of Arimathea, a member of the Sanhedrin (being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews), who had not consented to the death of Jesus, went to Pilate and boldly begged the body of Jesus. Pilate was surprised to hear that Jesus was dead so soon. "And calling unto him the centurion, he asked him if he had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph." Armed with authority, Joseph drew out the cruel nails, and with the help of others, among whom was Nicodemus, he took the body from the cross. They washed the blood and dust off the body. Joseph had bought some fine linen; and Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, and they took the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

Nearby was a garden, in which tombs were hewn in solid rock. One of these belonged to Joseph, and had been hewn for himself, and had never been used. He laid the body of Jesus in that tomb, and with the help of others, rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulcher.

Here were two of the foremost men of the Jews, with money and power, who believed in Jesus, and decided that his body should have decent burial. They knew that a great wrong had been done, which they could not prevent. They secured decent burial for Jesus, which is to their everlasting credit, in contrast to the everlasting contempt earned by those who brought about the crucifixion.

The friends of Jesus, who had kept at a distance, drew nearer when they saw that there was authority given to have the body well taken care of. "And Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joses, beheld where he was laid. (But they had not been near enough to see that spices had been provided for his burial, and later they came with spices.)

"He left his Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite his grace!
Emptied himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race;
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me."

GUARDING THE TOMB

Matthek 27:62-66

On the sabbath day, the chief priests and the Pharisees came to Pilate, saying, "We remember that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise again.' Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, 'He is risen from the dead.' So the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate allowed them to take all the soldiers they wanted from the Tower of Antonia. He said, "Make it as sure as ye can." . . . So they went and set a watch, and put the seal on the great stone at the opening of the sepulcher. These soldiers were to prevent the disciples from stealing the body. How weak is the power of man when measured against the power of God! These very soldiers testified to the resurrection of Jesus.

RESURRECTION OF JESUS

Matthew 28:1-8; *Mark* 16:1-8; *Luke* 24:1-12; *John* 20:1-10

Early on Sunday morning, at dawn, after Jesus had been in the grave from thirty-six to thirty-eight hours, the two Marys, Mary of Magdala and Mary, the mother of James, and others, drew near to the tomb. "And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men." The angel said to the women, "Fear not, ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay: and go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." They departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy to tell the disciples. Likewise the soldiers, when they found that Jesus was not in the tomb, hastened to the elders to apprise them of what had happened. When the women came to the disciples and reported that Jesus had risen from the dead, "Their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." However, Peter and John hastened to the tomb, and found it empty, with the linen clothes still lying there. Then they returned to the disciples and reported the tomb empty.

THE SOLDIERS ON GUARD REPORT TO THE ELDERS

Matthew 28:11-15

While the women were hastening to tell the disciples that Jesus had risen from the dead, the soldiers who had been placed on guard reported the same to the priests and the elders. They had a meeting to decide what to do, and decided to give the soldiers money to say, "His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept." They added, "If the governor hears about it, we will persuade him and make it safe for you." The soldiers took the money, and did as they were told, "and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day."

The thoughts that come to mind are: (1) How could the soldiers know what was happening while they were asleep? (2) The punishment was very severe for soldiers who slept at the post of duty, and we may safely conclude that not all of the guard would have slept at the same time. (3) A badly frightened lot of disciples, who had no faith when his resurrection was announced to them by the women, would not have risked their lives in opposition to a well-armed guard to steal his body away. (4) What would they have done with the body, if they had obtained it? They could not have borne it back to Galilee without detection; and in Jerusalem, it might as well remain where it was.

"Vain the stone, the watch, the seal,
Christ has burst the gates of hell:
Death, in vain, forbids his rise;
Christ has opened Paradise."

CHARLES WESLEY.

JESUS APPEARS TO MARY MAGDALENE

Mark 16:9-11; *John* 20:11-18

Mary of Magdala, whose many sins Jesus had forgiven, loved him with an everlasting love. With the joy of sins forgiven, and a love that would not let go, she did not leave the sepulcher with Peter and John, with whom she had come. "Mary stood without the sepulcher weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down and looked into the sepulcher, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou?' She said unto them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.' And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus said unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?' She supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, 'Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.' Jesus saith unto her, 'Mary.' She turned herself, and saith unto him, 'Rabboni'; which is to say, Master." As she was about to seize hold on him, Jesus said, "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them,' I ascend unto my Father and unto your Father, unto my God and your God'." Then Mary hastened to tell the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and what he told her. "And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not, as they mourned and wept."

"The Lord is risen indeed;
He lives to die no more;
He lives the sinner's cause to plead,
Whose curse and shame he bore."

THOMAS KELLY.

JESUS REVEALS HIMSELF TO TWO DISCIPLES ON THE WAY TO EMMAUS

Mark 16:12-13; *Luke* 24:13-35

Two sad disciples were going toward the village of Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking about the things that had just happened in Jerusalem. As they were talking, Jesus himself drew near, and joined their company. They did not know him. He asked them why they were so sad, and what they were reasoning about. One of them, named Cleopas, said "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that have come to pass there in these days?" Jesus said, "What things?" They said, "Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be put to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, today is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulcher: and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us went to the sepulcher, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not."

Then Jesus said, "Ought not Christ have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." When they came to the village, he made as if he would go further; and they asked if he would abide with them, because it was getting late; and he went in to tarry with them. "And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to the other, 'Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?' "

They did not stay in the village, but hastened back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples how Jesus had made himself known in the breaking of bread. The eleven apostles and others had a meeting behind locked doors for fear of the Jews. When these two disciples related what had happened to them, they in turn were told that "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared unto Simon." They were beginning to have hope.

JESUS SHOWS HIMSELF TO ALL OF THE APOSTLES EXCEPTING THOMAS

Mark 16:14; *Luke* 24:36-49; *John* 20:19-23

Jesus appeared in the midst of this group of disciples, and said, "Peace be unto you." All of the apostles but Thomas were present, and others. Then he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord, but they were also somewhat frightened, thinking they had seen a spirit. Jesus said, "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." To make himself yet more real to them, he asked for something to eat. They gave him a piece of fish, and of a honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them. Then he said unto them, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures. And he said unto them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father unto you; but tarry ye in Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high'."

THOMAS SEES JESUS

John 20:24-29

Eight days later his disciples were again assembled, and Thomas was with them. When others told him that the Lord had risen, he said that he would not believe unless he could put his finger in the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. Jesus appeared unto them, and said, "Peace be unto you." Then said he to Thomas, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God." Then Jesus said, "Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Jesus did many other signs in the presence of his disciples which are not recorded. But John says that these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ.

JESUS APPEARS TO DISCIPLES AT THE SEA OF TIBERIAS (GALILEE)

John 21:1-19

Peter, James, Thomas, John and Nathanael and two other disciples were together by the sea of Galilee. They were debating as to what they should do at that time. Peter said to the others, "I go a fishing." The others said they would go with him. They fished all night and caught nothing. At dawn Jesus stood on the shore, and as the boat was approaching, he called out to them, "Children have ye any meat?" They answered "No," not knowing that it was Jesus who was speaking to them. He told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat, and they would catch some. They cast the net, and were not able to draw it in for the multitude of fishes. John said to

Peter, "It is the Lord." Peter girt his fisher's coat about himself, and casting himself into the sea, swam to Jesus. The other disciples dragged the net to land. As soon as they came to land they saw a fire of coals and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus told them to bring of the fish they had caught. Peter drew the net to shore. When they counted them, they found that they had one hundred fifty-three big fish. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after he was risen from the dead.

The disciples were rather quiet and said nothing. They would expect a message from their Lord. Jesus asked them to dine with him. "None of the disciples durst ask him, 'Who are thou?', knowing that it was the Lord." Jesus took bread and fish and gave to them. They were hungry, for they had worked hard. He gave food to them, as he used to do.

Peter, who had denied his Lord three times, said nothing. He was in doubt as to his standing. Perhaps his Lord would disown him. Peter was rather uneasy. He had said, "Though all men should deny thee, yet will not I."

When they had dined, Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these (other disciples)?" Peter said, "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said to him, "Feed my lambs." Peter did not say that he loved him more than the others. The others had forsaken him, but Peter had gone one step further in denying him. Jesus said a second time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Peter replied, "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." Each time Jesus said, "Simon, son of Jonas." He was not Peter, the rock. He had shown himself weak in the hour of trial. He felt humiliated; and when Jesus said the third time, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?" Peter wept, and he said, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep." Peter had denied his Lord three times, and now he confessed three times that he loved him. Each time the Lord said, "Feed my sheep." The sheep are the followers of Jesus. Peter was to be a minister to them: he was to be a leader. Then Jesus told Peter something that would not make him glad. He said that when Peter was a young man, he went about doing as he pleased; but when he is old, they would tie his hands together, and lead him where he does not want to go. Peter was to be a martyr for Jesus. So far as we know, all the apostles were martyrs for Jesus. James was the first. There were thousands of martyrs before Peter was crucified at Rome. They could have escaped by denying Jesus; but they would rather die than deny him.

"Thou wast their rock, their fortress, and their might;
Thou, Lord, their captain in the well-fought fight;
Thou, in the darkness drear, their one true light."

Peter wanted to know what would happen to John. Jesus said, "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? Follow thou me." Our concern should be to please the Lord by laboring well in his vineyard. The reply Jesus made to Peter also applies to those who are anxious to know when Jesus is coming.

JESUS APPEARS TO MANY DISCIPLES IN GALILEE

Matthew 28:16-20; *I. Corinthians* 16:6-7

The angel had told Mary Magdalene to tell the disciples that Jesus would meet them in Galilee. The eleven apostles went to a mountain to wait for him, and there other disciples joined them. This may have been the mount on which he had stated the principles of his kingdom. Here Jesus showed himself to those who had gathered, but some doubted. Then Jesus came near to them, saying, "All power is given to me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the earth." About five hundred disciples were present at this appearance of Jesus.

Jesus also showed himself to James, one of the brethren. James, later on, was at the head of the church at Jerusalem. He also wrote the "General Epistle of James." James believed after he saw Jesus risen from the dead.

THE ASCENSION

Luke 24:50-53; *Acts* 1:1-12

Jesus, in order to show his disciples that he was alive, had appeared to them in bodily form at different times during forty days. The time had now come when he would part from them on the Mount of Olives, near Bethany; and there he met a large number, whom he instructed to remain in Jerusalem to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit not many days hence.

At this time some of his disciples wanted to know if he was now going to restore the kingdom to Israel. They still thought that the kingdom of God would start with the overthrow of the Roman power. Jesus said that they would receive power after the Holy Spirit is come to them; and then "ye shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth."

As he blessed them, "while they looked at him, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight; and two men stood by them in white apparel, which said, 'Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven'."

Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They praised God in the temple, but they offered no sacrifices. Jesus, the Lamb of God, had been slain for the sins of the world. He had risen from the dead; and had been raised to glory; and they were eye-witnesses of what had happened; and they were to witness for Jesus after they had received the baptism of the Spirit.

CHAPTER XIII.

CHOOSING AN APOSTLE TO TAKE THE PLACE OF JUDAS

Acts 1:13-26

The disciples remained in Jerusalem, as Jesus had commanded them, and held meetings in a large upper room. At these meetings not only the twelve apostles, but also the women who had come from Galilee, and other disciples, were present. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was there. In these meetings, they prayed and planned, and awaited the baptism of the Spirit, which had been promised.

It was decided by the apostles that an apostle should be chosen to take the place of Judas, who had turned traitor and then killed himself. Peter, as their spokesman, arose and addressed an audience of about a hundred and twenty people; the larger part of whom were probably the seventy disciples whom Jesus had previously sent forth to preach and to heal. Peter stated that an apostle should be chosen from among those who had followed Jesus from the baptism of John until the resurrection, and who was present at the ascension. They chose two men named Joseph and Matthias. Then they prayed, saying, "Thou Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, show which of these two thou hast chosen." Matthias was chosen by lot.

THE BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST ON THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Acts 2:1-13

The day of Pentecost was fifty days after the second day of passover. It was a day of thanksgiving for the harvest, and thousands of people gathered at Jerusalem to attend the festival. On this day the disciples received the baptism of the Spirit. "When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there was a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."

John the Baptist had said that Christ would baptize his disciples with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and now it had come to pass. The disciples were filled with the Spirit, and all their fears were gone. They rejoiced in the love of Christ, and spoke in different languages.

Thousands were attracted to the place where the disciples were. They had come from all parts of the world, and spoke the languages of the countries from which they had come. They were amazed to hear the disciples speak in their languages, and said, "Are not all these Galileans?" They were in doubt as to what all this meant. Some mocked, saying, "These men are full of new wine." These mockers, probably, were natives of Jerusalem, who did not perceive the miracles of tongues; because they did not know that the disciples were speaking correctly in other languages. Among these may have been priests, Scribes and Pharisees, who resisted the Holy Ghost, and who could not understand the joy of the disciples.

PETER'S SERMON

Acts 2:14-40

Peter and the other apostles stood up when they heard what the mockers from Jerusalem said, to show that they were not drunk. Peter reminded these mockers that it was only nine o'clock in the morning, and there had not been enough time in which to become drunk. He said what they saw had been foretold by the prophet Joel when he said, "It shall come to pass in the last days I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams . . ." Then Peter made it plain to them that Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among them by miracles, and wonders and signs; which God did by him, they had slain; and God had raised him from the dead. He said that all these disciples were witnesses of the resurrection of Jesus, to whom the Father promised that he would send the Holy Ghost, which he hath shed forth as ye now see and hear. "Therefore let all the house of Israel know that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."

Crowds of people must have gathered about the disciples who were speaking in their languages. These disciples bore testimony to the resurrection of Jesus in their burning enthusiasm, and carried conviction to thousands.

THREE THOUSAND CONVERTED

Acts 1:37-41

When those who had taken part in bringing about the death of Jesus, learned from Peter that Jesus had risen from the dead and that he was both Lord and Christ, they felt guilty and miserable. Not only these but others believed, and wanted to be in favor with God, and said to Peter and to the other apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said, "Repent, and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." With many other words he exhorted them, saying that they were to save themselves from the perverse generation in which they lived. "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

This was the first day of the Christian church, and what a wonderful day it was. It was so different from what the apostles once thought it would be. There was no marshaling of armies, no appointing of captains. Selfishness had given way to love. The kingdom of God was plainly to be in the hearts of people. The Holy Spirit in the heart would conquer meanness and selfishness, and make people have sympathy toward each other.

THE INFANT CHURCH

Acts 2:42-47

The disciples listened to the preaching of the apostles, and they kept together. Those who had things shared with those who did not have any. They went to the temple daily at the hour of prayer, and met in each other's houses to hold communion. They were glad and loved each other, and praised God. All the people spoke well of them, and daily others joined the church. Some of those who yelled "Crucify him" saw their great mistake, and repented. Many of the priests were obedient to the faith. "With great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all."

THE TRIUMPH OF THE CROSS

We have now finished the story of Jesus, a wondrous story of love, sacrifice, and devotion; and yet, it is a fact that Jesus is scarcely mentioned in the profane history of his day. One would think that Josephus, who was born in 37 A. D., should have given Jesus more than passing notice in his history. He scarcely mentions the "One who closed all the history of the past, and inaugurated all the history of the future." Who is worshipped by all of the most brilliant nations as God manifest in the flesh. We must remember that Josephus belonged to a Jewish priestly family and to the order of the Pharisees, whom Jesus condemned. The part the priesthood played in the treatment of Jesus was most despicable.

We must also remember that Josephus the historian wrote from Rome, where he lived in an atmosphere of pagan thought, which was firmly set against the "Christian heresy." His own nation was practically wiped out when Jerusalem was destroyed, and over a million Jews were lost in the struggle, a struggle from which the Christians held aloof. We must remember that Jesus was not the kind of Messiah for whom the Jews were looking. They had looked for a leader who would overthrow the Roman power and dash the enemies of Judaism on the rocks.

Josephus makes mention of John the Baptist, whose ministry occupied less than half as much time as that of Jesus, and who was entirely eclipsed by Jesus, as John himself confessed, and as Josephus well knew. Christianity was rapidly gaining ground, and was a strong factor in the Roman state while Josephus was writing his histories. The burning of Rome was charged against the Christians by Nero. The charge was false, but it shows that the Christians were a numerous body in Rome in 64 A. D.; and a much stronger factor in 100 A. D., when Josephus was still writing. This will appear from a letter written by Pliny to Trajan, about 112 A. D. (See appendix.) Josephus was pensioned by Vespasian, and to please him and his patron Flavius, he would practically ignore Christianity.

Jesus came eating and drinking and wearing the same kind of clothes as were worn by the average man. He was a village carpenter, who respected authority and checked all excitement. His followers were chosen from humble people. He spent his time among the common people, lightening their burdens, loving them, and sympathizing with them in all their trials. He preached the gospel of love and charity and sympathy, and led a sinless life. The miracles he performed were done out of sympathy, and never for show. He would not show a sign to the Pharisees to prove his divinity, neither would he make bread out of stones at the request of the evil spirit.

By his works, he demonstrated that he was the Christ, and his power could not be denied. The only way for the priests and the rulers to combat that which was self-evident was to ascribe his miracles to magic. They said the devil helps him. They seemed to have more faith in the power of the devil than in the power of God. Strange that the devil should help to overthrow his own kingdom! Jesus was a reformer, and they did not wish to be reformed. Their living came from the present order of things, and they did not want that changed. They grew fat and pompous and rich on the tithes and the temple income, on the good meat of the best cattle and sheep.

After Lazarus was raised from the dead, the rulers felt that Jesus must be destroyed, or they would lose their power over the people. They found him guilty of blasphemy, because he said that he was the Son of God; and they crucified him along with malefactors, as if he were the chief of them. They laid him in a tomb, but he rose from the dead, and lived again; and was seen by his followers, and talked with them. They were sure of this, and were willing to lay down their lives in testifying for a living Christ. They would not have risked their lives if he had not risen from the dead.

The rulers of the Jews, the makers of books, the people of culture (?), the pagan world, those who were proud of their thinking, and the power of the Roman government; all these were arrayed against the followers of the lowly Jesus. There were martyrs by the thousand and great persecutions, but the church withstood the shock; and all the powers of evil shall not prevail against it. This is a great triumph!

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels postrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown him Lord of all.

"Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To him all majesty ascribe,
And crown him Lord of all."

EDWARD PERRONET.

THE END

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

HISTORICAL RECORDS, ASIDE FROM THE GOSPELS.

(1) Annal-Book 15, by Tacitus; in his History of the Julian Emperors from Tiberias to Nero. (14 A. D. to 68 A. D.)

"Nero, in order to stifle the rumor that he had set Rome on fire, ascribed it to those people who were hated for their wicked practices, and called by the vulgar, *Christians*: these he punished exquisitely. The author of this name was Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, was brought to punishment by Pontius Pilate, the procurator. For the present this pernicious superstition was partly suppressed, but it broke out again, not only over Judea, whence this mischief first sprang, but in the city of Rome also, whither run from every quarter, and make a noise, all the flagrant and shameful enormities.

"At first, therefore, those were seized who confessed; after a *vast multitude* were detected by them, and were convicted, *not so much as really guilty of setting the city on fire,* but as hating all mankind; nay, they made mock of them as they perished, and destroyed them by putting them in the skins of wild beasts, and setting dogs on them to tear them to pieces: some were nailed to crosses, and others flamed to death. They were also used in the night time instead of torches for illumination. Nero had offered his own garden for this spectacle. He also gave them Circensian games, and dressed himself like the driver of a chariot, sometimes appearing among the common people, and sometimes in the circle itself. Whence a commiseration arose, though the punishments were levelled at guilty persons, and such as deserved to be made the most flagrant examples, as if these people were destroyed, not for the public advantage, but to satisfy the barbarous humor of one man."

We have here evidence of the brutality of Nero, and the persecution of many Christians in Rome in the year 64 A. D.

(2) PLINY'S EPISTLE TO TRAJAN, THE EMPEROR, ABOUT 112 A. D.

"Sir—It is my constant method to apply myself to you for the resolution of all my doubts; for who can better govern my dilatory way of proceeding, or instruct my ignorance?

"I have never been present at the examination of the CHRISTIANS by others, on which account I am unacquainted with what use to be inquired into, and what, and how far, they use to be punished; nor are my doubts small, whether there be not a distinction to be made between the ages of the accused, and whether tender youth ought to have the same punishment with strong men? whether there be not room for pardon upon repentance? or whether it may not be an advantage to one that had been a Christian, that he had forsaken Christianity? whether the bare name, without any crime besides, or the crime adhering in that name, be to be punished?

"In the meantime, I have taken this course about those who have been brought before me as Christians: I asked them if they were Christians or not? If they confessed that they were Christians, I asked them again, and a third time, intermixing threatenings with the questions: if they persevered in their confession, I ordered them to be executed; for I did not doubt but, let their confession be, this positiveness and inflexible obstinacy deserves to be punished.

"There have been some of this mad sect whom I took notice in particular as Roman citizens, that they might be sent to that city. After some time, as is usual in such examinations, the crime spread itself, and many more cases came before me. A libel was sent to me, though without any author, containing many names of persons accused. These denied that they were Christians now, or ever had been. They called upon the gods and supplicated to your image, which I caused to be brought to me for that purpose, with frankincense and wine: they also cursed Christ: none of which things, as it is said, can any of those that are really Christians be compelled to do; so I thought fit to let them go. Others of them that were named in the libel, said that they were Christians, but presently denied it again, that indeed they had been Christians, but had ceased to be so, some three years, some many more; and one there was who said he had not been so these twenty years. All these worshipped your image, and the image of your gods; these also cursed Christ.

"However, they assured me, that the main of their fault, or of their mistake, was this, *that they were wont on a stated day to meet together before it was light, and to sing a hymn to Christ, as to a God, alternately; and to obligate themselves by a sacrament, not to do anything that was ill, but that they would commit no theft, or pilfering, or adultery; that they would not break their promises, or deny what was deposited with them when it was required back again;* after which it was their custom to depart, and to meet again at a common, but innocent meal, which they had left off upon that edict which I had published at your command, and wherein I had forbidden any such conventicles.

"These examinations made me think it necessary to inquire by torments what the truth was, which I did of two servant maids, who were called *deaconnesses;* but still I discovered no more than that they were addicted to a bad and to an extravagant superstition. Hereupon I have put off any further examinations, and have recourse to you, for the affair seems to be well worth consultation, especially on account of the number of those who are in danger; for there are many of every age, of every rank, and of both sexes, who are now and hereafter likely to be called to account, and to be in danger, for *this superstition is spread like a contagion, not only in cities and towns, but into country villages also,* which yet there is reason to hope may be stopped and corrected. To be sure, the temples, which were almost forsaken, begin again to be frequented; and the holy solemnities, which were long intermitted, begin to be revived. The sacrifices begin to sell everywhere, of which very few purchasers had of late appeared; whereby it is easy to suppose how great a multitude of men might be amended, if place for repentance be admitted."

It is hard to conceive how a pagan of the standing of Pliny, could ask people to worship the image of an emperor who was still living, and execute those who steadfastly stood for their belief. No wonder the Roman empire began to totter.

(3) TRAJAN'S REPLY.

My Pliny—You have taken the method you ought in examining the causes of those who had been accused as Christians, for indeed no certain nor general form of judging can be ordained in this case. *These people are not to be sought for;* but if they be accused, and convicted, they are to be punished; but with this caution, that he who denies himself to be a Christian, and makes it plain that he is not so, by supplicating to our gods, although he had been so formerly, may be allowed pardon upon his repentance. As for libels sent without an author, they ought to have no place in any accusation whatever, for that would be a thing of very ill example, and not agreeable to my reign.

THE CATACOMBS

Tradition says that one hundred seventy-four thousand Christians were buried in the catacombs of Rome. Many of these were martryrs. From about 125 A. D., the phrase, "In Christ," occurs frequently in burial inscriptions. Symbolic pictures also portray Christian themes, such as the Multiplication of Loaves, the Good Shepherd, The Last Judgment, the Resurrection, Christ's work as Savior. These pictures reflect the popular religious thought of early Christians.

EARLIEST NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS

About twenty years after the death of Jesus, Paul wrote the Epistles to the Thessalonians and to the Galatians. These were written before the first gospel. When the eye-witnesses began to pass away, it was found highly desirable to put the facts of the life and teachings of Jesus in writing, and that led to the writing of the gospel accounts. The early epistles of Paul are very interesting, since they contain no quotations from the gospels, and yet they ring true to the gospel teaching.

CHRISTIANITY AT WORK IN THE 20TH CENTURY

Gensuke Oosone, a native of Japan, accepted Jesus as his Savior. He learned about him in the Christian school he attended in his country, and decided to live the Christian life. He became interested in the education of the deaf, and taught in the largest school for the deaf in Japan at Osaka. He saved money for ten years to pay for a tour of America to learn about our methods of teaching the deaf. We were all charmed by his friendliness, and he made us feel very kindly toward Our Sister Nation Beyond the Seas. The deaf boys of our school presented him with a pennant to show their goodwill.

Oosone in a very practical way represents his Master. Those who are willing to sacrifice for the common good are representatives of Jesus in this age. Oosone made a perfect sacrifice in that he laid his all upon the altar to be of greater service to his people.

Our best wishes go with our brother as he departs for the homeland to rejoin his teacher comrades. B. S.

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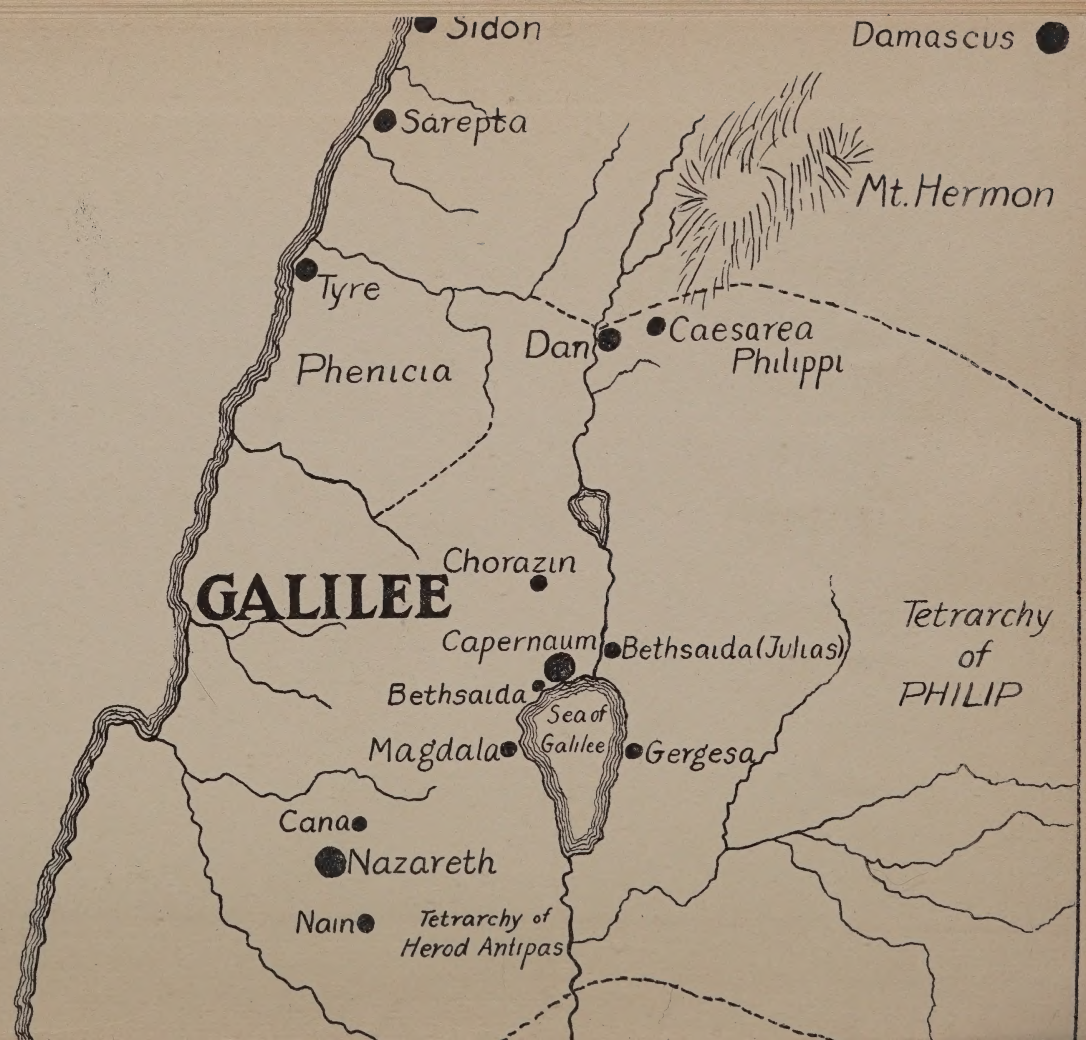
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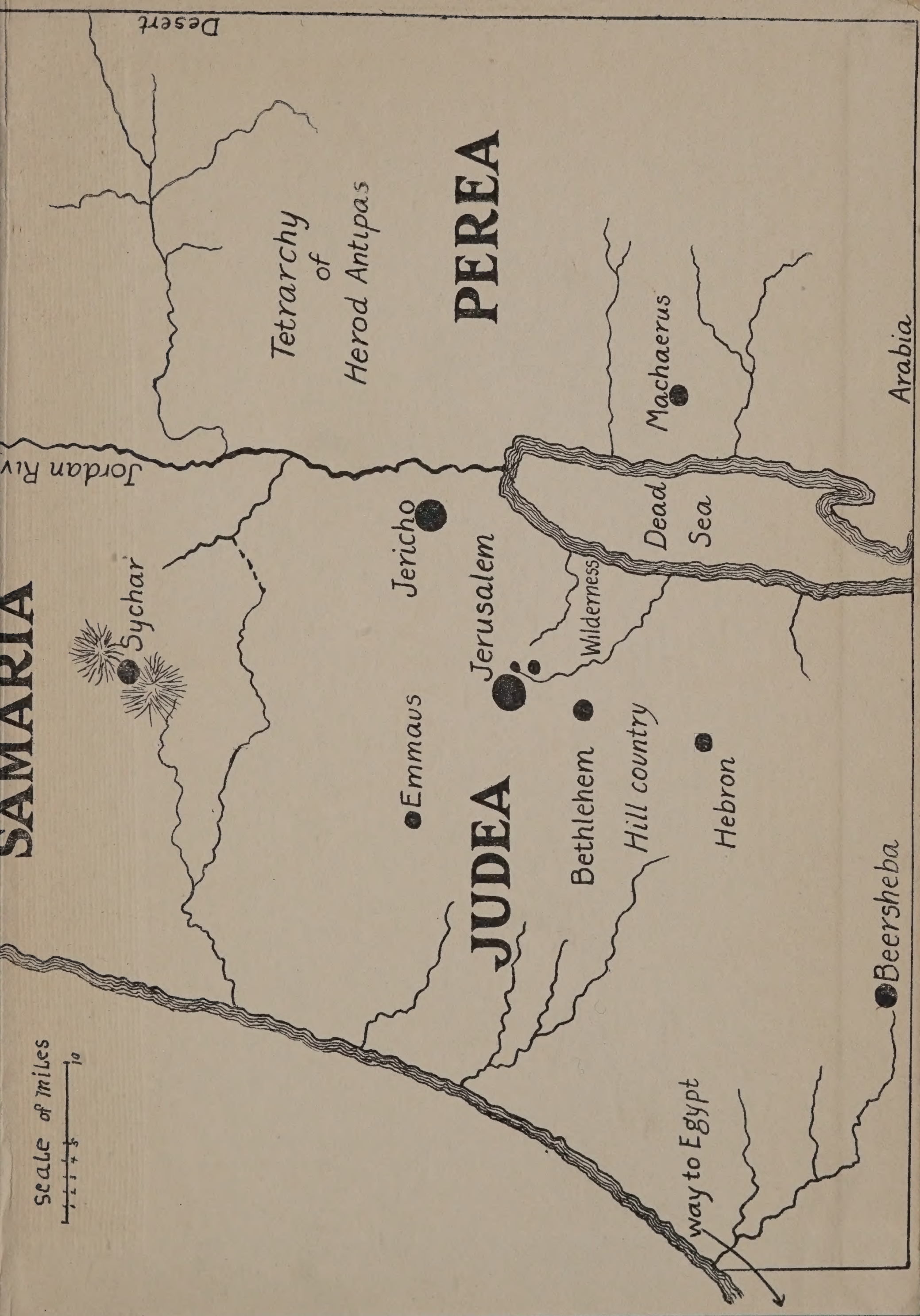
Tetrarchy of Herod Antipas


SAMARIA
Sychar
Emmaus
JUDEA
Jericho
Jerusalem
Bethlehem
Hill country
Hebron
Wilderness
Beersheba
way to Egypt
Jordan Riv
Dead Sea
PEREA
Tetrarchy of Herod Antipas
Machaerus
Arabia
Desert
scale of miles
1 2 3 4 5
10

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